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Lately Published,

By ALEXANDER JEPSON, A.B.

THE REALITY and AUTHORITY of OUR BELIEF  
and SAVIOUR'S Miracles Demonstrated  
In Answer to all the Material Objections which have been  
lately against them.

CERTAINTY

IN THE

IMPORTANCE

OF A

Future Judgment, &c.

The Second Edition.

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I. **T**HE REALITY and AUTHORITY of Our BLESSED SAVIOUR's Miracles Defended.

In Answer to all the Material Objections which have been raised against them.

II. A DISCOURSE concerning the *Religious Observation* of the LORD's DAY, both Doctrinal and Practical :

IN TWO PARTS.

Under the following HEADS, viz.

1. The Grounds and Reasons of the Observation of the SABBATH and LORD's DAY.
2. An Account of the Change of the Day from the *Seventh* to the *First* Day of the Week.
3. The Benefits and Advantages, both to the Public, and to private Persons, from the Devout and Religious Observation of the LORD's DAY.
4. The Particular Manner in which this HOLY DAY ought to be observed by all CHRISTIANS.

THE SECOND EDITION.





THE  
CERTAINTY  
AND  
IMPORTANCE  
OF A  
Future Judgment,

AND  
EVERLASTING RETRIBUTIONS,  
Considered and Represented in  
THREE DISCOURSES,  
Lately Preached in the  
PARISH-CHURCH of CRAIKE,  
In the COUNTY of DURHAM.

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By ALEXANDER JEPHSON, A.B.  
Rector of the said Parish.

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# THE CERTAINTY

AND IMPORTANCE

OF A FUTURE JUDGMENT

AND EVERLASTING REtribUTIONS

THREE COURSES



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of the Great Street and Church.

# THE PREFACE.

**T**HERE will be no Need, I presume, of making any Apology for publishing these present Discourses in this wicked and degenerate Age, in which all manner of Impiety and Profaneness does so much abound; since it is unquestionably the Duty of all Christians, and especially those who are of the sacred Function, as well for the Credit and Reputation of our Religion among Heathens and Infidels, as out of an immediate Regard to the Honour and Glory of God, to use their utmost Endeavours to prevent and restrain the Effects thereof, and to recover a true Sense of Piety and Virtue in the Nation.

Tho' the Face of Religion in the Christian World hath been very much altered and improved since the coming of Christ (a), (notwithstanding what the Infidels object to the contrary) and tho' there are, God be praised, many bright and shining Examples of Piety and Goodness to be found in every Part of the Kingdom, yet it is too evident to be denied, that the Generality

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(a) See Archbishop Tillotson's Works, fol. vol. II. p. 471—2. Dr Cave's Primitive Christianity, Part I. chap. 3. about the Middle. Part III. chap. 3. in the Beginning.

of Christians are almost entirely abandoned and given up to Secular Interest and Pleasure, and absolutely lost to any serious Sense of God and Religion; and the most plain and easy Duties, such as those of Family-Devotion, and the attending upon the Publick Worship of God, are by great Numbers entirely laid aside, and by too many treated with Scorn. And that which, under the Providence of God, would be the most likely and effectual Means of retrieving a true Sense of Piety in the Minds of Men, by giving them a Regular and Stated Opportunity of a more close and deep Meditation upon Divine Things, I mean the Religious Observation of the Lord's Day, is in Defiance of all the Laws of God and Man, most shamefully and horribly neglected and ridiculed: And this not only by those who are of low and vulgar Education, but also (which I am sorry to say, because I think it not only of the utmost dangerous Consequence to their Salvation, but also a great Reflection at present upon their Character and Dignity) by many of the highest Quality in the Kingdom.

In a just View of which wretched and deplorable State of Things, I humbly conceive, that all Persons in Authority, from the highest to the lowest, should be earnestly put in Mind by all those, whose Counsels may probably have any Influence upon them, that it is their indispensable Duty, as they tender the Love and Favour of God, and the Happiness and Benefit of the People who are subject to them, to use their utmost Endeavours, as well by setting a good Example in themselves, as by the publick Execution of the Laws, to promote and advance the Cause of Piety and Religion (b); since

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(b) If Moral Virtues are acknowledged necessary to Social Felicity, Religion must be so too: because no other Principle can offer an equal Inducement to the Practice of them, or equally restrain Men from the opposite Vices. 'Tis vain to imagine, that the Fear of the Magistrate or political Laws can effectually govern the Actions



if there be not some speedy Reformation in our Lives and Manners, and especially if in order thereto some effectual Provision be not made, that the Lord's Day be more strictly and regularly observed by all Persons, and chiefly by those of eminent Station and Dignity; we shall bring an indelible Infamy upon the Protestant Religion, the Security of which we have so long boasted of as our singular Happiness, and which we have judged a sufficient Purchase of an infinite Expence of Blood and Treasure. And we may not only expect, that the heaviest and most dreadful Judgments of God will soon fall upon us, but we shall also have too great Reason to fear, if the Doctrine of the Gospel shall prove true in the Event (and I really think, if it should prove otherwise, that we can have no sufficient Evidence of any thing that is not the Object of our Senses) that wretched and deplorable will be the State and Condition of the greatest Part of Mankind; as our Blessed Saviour hath Himself in some Measure intimated to us, *Matth. vii. 13, 14.* And the Foresight of which many Divines have justly thought to be the main Ground and Reason of His inexpressible Agony in the Garden, *Luke xxii. 44.* since it is very evident and apparent, that there

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of Men without the Aid of Religion; for the Duty of obeying those Laws must be derived from a superior Principle. And he who looks no higher for the Motives of his Conduct than the Resentment of Human Justice, whenever he can presume himself cunning enough to resist it, will be under no Restraint from any Action of Treachery, or Lust, or Violence, which his Passions suggest. *Dr Rogers's Sermons, vol. II. p. 360, 361.* And the same Acknowledgment hath been often made by many great Men, who were far from being partial to Religion; and particularly by *Mr. Hobbes* in *Leviath. chap. 12.* and by *Machiavel*, in his Discourses upon *Livy, L. I. c. 11 12.* So that if Princes were to regard only the present Interest of themselves and their Subjects (and much more surely, if they have any Concern for their Happiness and Salvation in the World to come) they are bound to the utmost of their Power, both by enacting of wise Laws, and by setting a good Example, to establish the Belief and Practice of Religion in their respective Kingdoms.

there are but few in Comparifon, even among Chriftians themfelves, who in their Lives and Conversations do in any Meafure come up to the Terms of Salvation propounded in the Gospel; and God, who cannot lie, hath peremptorily declared, *That without Holinefs no Man fhall ever fee Him*, Heb. xii. 14. And, as an excellent Prelate well expreffes it (c), “ Sooner may Heaven and Earth pafs away, than a wicked Man enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.” An Apprehenfion this, enough to make the Heart of any good Man bleed; and He muft be utterly deftitute of Humanity, not to fay any ferious Senfe of Chriftian Compaffion, who is not moved and influenced thereby to contribute all that is in him to the Prevention of fuch a horrid and dreadful Ruin.

That I might be in fome Degree affifting to this good Purpofe, was the true Reafon of my publishing thefe Sermons at this Time; having concluded with myfelf, that a few plain Difcourfes, in which the Arguments of a future Judgment might be clearly ftated, and the infinite Confequence of Eternal Retributions fufficiently display’d, and thefe drawn up in a fhort Compafs and at a cheap Price, muft needs be of great Ufe and Service to the Generality of Chriftians; fince I am thoroughly perfuaded, that the Profanenefs and Immorality of this prefent Age muft be owing, either to an utter Difbelief of this great Article of Chriftian Faith, or to a Doubtfulnefs and Irrefolution in the Acknowledgment thereof; it being fcarce conceivable, that any one who firmly believes this Doctrin, and gives any tolerable Attention thereto, fhould wilfully allow and indulge himfelf in any known Sin; and much lefs that he fhould (as too many profefs’d Chriftians do) frequently and habitually plunge himfelf into the Guilt of the moft horrid and enormous Crimes. For, as an eminent

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(c) Tillotfon, vol. III. p. 199. fee the Place.

eminent Author well observes (d) ' There is sure no  
 ' Stupidity can exceed that of the Man who expects a  
 ' future Judgment, and yet can bear to commit any  
 ' Piece of Injustice with a Sense of Deliberation of the  
 ' Fact.' And, to use the Words of another excellent  
 Divine, ' It is not to be imagined, that any Man who  
 ' believes this Doctrine, and would suffer himself seri-  
 ' ously to think of it, could bear up against the Ter-  
 ' rors of it; or that, with these Thoughts about him,  
 ' he could court a Strumpet, or spend his Time in Re-  
 ' vels and Excesses, or blaspheme God, and ridicule  
 ' Religion, or cheat his Neighbour, or oppress the  
 ' Poor and Fatherless, or forswear himself.' No, says  
 this pious Author, ' we see this cannot be as often as  
 ' we see a miserable Sinner, whose awaken'd Consci-  
 ' ence distracts him with all these Scenes and Images of  
 ' Terror (e).'

That therefore Men might be the more fully con-  
 vinced of the Truth and Certainty of this important  
 Doctrine, and thereby prevail'd upon to such a due and  
 serious Consideration thereof, as may be available to  
 the Salvation of their immortal Souls, I have in the  
 first Discourse, (as perfectly as I could in such narrow  
 Bounds) represented the chief and principal Proofs and  
 Evidences of a future Judgment, as they are deduced  
 from natural Reason and Divine Revelation, and have  
 briefly considered the Effect and Influence which the  
 Belief and Expectation of that great and tremendous  
 Assize ought to have upon us. In the second, I have  
 treated distinctly concerning the dreadful Nature of  
 those Punishments which are prepared in Hell for all  
 obstinate and impenitent Sinners. And in the third, I  
 have endeavoured, as far as I am able, to display the  
 Qualities and Ingredients of that immense Glory and  
 Happiness.

(d) Dr Croxall's *Æsop*, p. 54.

(e) *Sherlock on a future Judgment*, p. 132—3.

## The PREFACE.

Happiness which God hath reserved in Heaven for them that love him; and I have shewn in what Manner we ought to be disposed and affected by each of them. And in the Description of both, I have given no Scope and Indulgence to Fancy and Imagination, but have confined myself wholly to those Accounts which are expressly delivered to us in the Word of God. Tho', as many learned Divines have very truly observed, there is no one who can know the Power of God's Anger, nor understand the Measure of infinite Love; and therefore, it hath been thought highly reasonable to conclude, that the Punishments of the Wicked in the next World, as well as the Happiness of the Righteous, will in the Event be found to be much greater, and more weighty, than any thing which is set forth and represented to us in Scripture (*f*). Only, in the second Discourse, concerning future Misery, I have mentioned one thing, which the ancient *Platonists* imagined would be an Ingredient of the Torments of evil Spirits, because it hath been esteemed by some of our best Divines, to have a great Probability and Foundation in Reason: Tho' I there expressly observe, that as the sacred Writings have not reckon'd this among the Punishments of the Damned, I shall not lay any Stress upon it.

Having observed thus much concerning the Reason and Design of publishing these Discourses, I shall beg leave, before I conclude this Preface, to make a serious Application to two kinds of Men, in order to render them more useful and serviceable to them.

*First.* To the sober and moderate Deists, who really believe, as they pretend, all the Principles and Doctrines of Natural Religion. Now, in a View of the Importance and Consequence of our present Argument, I would earnestly beg of these Persons, (if that what I here offer to the Publick should happen to fall into their

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(*f*) See particularly *Sharlack* on Death, p. 76, 77.



their Hands) that since a future State of Rewards and Punishments hath been ever accounted an essential Doctrine of Natural Religion, they would not only forbear all open Insult and Ridicule of the Gospel (which is a Liberty that many of the very best of them all frequently indulge themselves in, tho' a favourite Author of theirs hath utterly disclaimed and disallowed the publick Use and Exercise of it (g)) But also that they would do all that lies in their Power, by a thorough and impartial Examination of the Controversy between us, to persuade themselves into a real and hearty Belief of the Christian Religion; since they must needs perceive, that supposing our Saviour to be no more than an extraordinary Prophet (which is the utmost Character that the very best Writings of Deism will allow to Him) there is yet, with regard to the Immortality of the Soul and a future State of Rewards and Punishments, a mighty Difference between the Doctrine of Christ's Gospel, and that of the most perfect *Pagan* Systems; and therefore, methinks, all sober and sincere Deists should be very glad if this Prophet, who, in the Delivery of the great Sanctions of Religion, as well as the most excellent and incomparable Morality, was allow'd, even by his Enemies, *to speak as never Man spake*, John vii. 46. and *who taught as one that had Authority*, and *not as the Scribes*, Matth. vii. 29 could be proved to be a Divine Person, and to have an immediate Commis-

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(g) The Author of the *Characteristicks*, tho' he vindicates the Liberty of Wit and Ridicule in Matters of Religion, yet he restrains it to the private Meeting and Societies of Men; and owns, that to start Questions and manage Debates which offend the Publick Ear, is to be wanting in that Respect which is due to common Society. And that such Subjects should either not at all be treated in Publick, or in such a Manner as to occasion no Scandal or Disturbance, that the Publick is not on any Account to be laughed at to its Face, and that the Lovers of Mankind respect and honour Conventions and Societies of Men more than this amounts to.

*Essay on the Freedom of Wit and Humour*, in vol. I. p. 75, 76

sion from God. And they might entertain some small Suspicion of their own Integrity and Impartiality in the Examination of this Religion, when they deny the Truth and Reality of Christ's Miracles, which were never call'd in question by the most learned and implacable Adversaries of the Gospel, either *Jews, Turks, or Heathens* (b). And when they renounce the Divine Authority of that Person, which was so clear and certain, that it was acknowledged by *Mahomet* himself (i).

Now the vast Difference between the Doctrine of Christ's Gospel, and that of the best *Pagan* Systems upon this Head, will be very evident, if we briefly consider these following Particulars.

*First.* Not to mention, that the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, and a future State, was entirely rejected by whole Sects of Philosophers, because, as an eminent Author truly affirms, these Persons were very weak Reasoners in other Respects, and of a low and contemptible Character (k); I say, not to mention this, we find that it was denied by some of the most Learned of them all, as *Cicero* assures us (l); and that even the Philosophers of the highest Rank, who discours'd the most excellently upon this Subject of the Soul's Immortality, did yet oftentimes express the greatest Doubt and Uncertainty

(b) Vid. Grot. de Veritat. Christianæ Relig. lib. 2. § 5. lib. 6. § 5. Bishop Chandler's Defence of Christianity, p. 429, 430. Bishop Smalbrooke's Vindication of Christ's Miracles, vol. I. p. 37.

(i) Vid. Grot. ibid. § 4.

(k) Dr S. Clarke's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures, Part II. Prop. 6.

§ 3.

(l) Catervæ veniunt contradicentium non solum Epicureorum, quo equidem non despicio, sed nescio quo modo doctissimus quisque contemnit: acerrimè autem deliciae meæ Dicæarchus contra hanc immortalitatem disseruit: Is enim tres libros scripsit qui Le biaci vocantur, quod Mitylenis sermo habetur, in quibus vult efficere, animos esse mortales. Cic. Tuscul. Quæst. lib. 1.

Uncertainty about the Truth of it (*m*). Which must needs, in a considerable Measure, lessen and destroy its Effect and Influence upon the Minds of Men; where, as none of the Apostles or true Disciples of Christ did ever call this Truth in question, but many of them, beyond Number, of all Ages and both Sexes, did for about 300 Years together with an unparalleled Bravery and Courage lay down their Lives in Testimony and Confidence hereof (*n*).

Secondly, The Pagan System of Religion was, with regard to the general Opinion and Persuasion of those who adhered to it, equally terrible with that of the Christian, as it threatened Eternal Torments as the Punishment of Sinners. For tho' a late Infidel Writer (*o*) hath confidently asserted, that 'the Evil of Superstition is much increased, since men are now' (*i. e.* by the Christian Religion) 'under greater Terrors and Uneasiness of Mind, than they could possibly be when they hazarded less;' hereby imagining, that Eternal Torments were not denounced in the Pagan Scheme. Yet he is certainly very much mistaken herein; for it is very clear and evident, that the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment in another Life was not only delivered by some of the best of the Heathen Philosophers

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(*m*) Vid. Grot. de Veritat. &c. lib. 2. § 9. cum annotat. Tillotson, vol. III. p. 133, 134. Dr Clarke's Sermons at Boyle's Lectures, Part 2. Prop. 6. § 3. Bishop Gibson's Second Pastoral Letter, p. 17, 18. in which Places there are several Passages cited from the Ancients to this Purpose.

(*n*) See Dr Cave's Primitive Christianity, Part II. chap. 7. in which the Persecutions of the Primitive Christians are particularly described, and many Testimonies quoted out of Heathen Authors, acknowledging that they laid down their Lives in the Strength of this Principle, together with the absurd Account which some of the most eminent Pagan Writers gave of their inimitable Constancy and Patience under their Sufferings.

(*o*) Discourse of Free thinking, p. 36.

Philosophers (p), but also that it was a material and essential Branch of the *Pagan* System, as is acknowledged by *Lucretius* himself (q), who makes it the peculiar Character and Glory of *Epicurus*, that he had so powerfully delivered Mankind from these senseless Terrors and vain Fears (r). Whereas, on the other side, the *Pagans* had but a small Degree of Comfort to balance their Fears, and to encourage them in the Practice of Virtue. For, first, the very Being of a future State was not only called in question by the whole Sect of the *Epicureans* and other minute Philosophers, and very much doubted of by the most learned of them all, but was utterly renounced and rejected by many of the chief and principal Philosophers, as was before observ'd. And tho' this may seem to be no Consequence to our present Argument, since by denying a future State the Fears of Punishment were as well extinguished, as the Hopes of Reward removed from the Minds of Men; yet it is a very great Mistake to think so. For it is natural to Men, especially when they fall into the Guilt

(p) Οἱ δ' ἂν δόξωσιν ἀνίατος ἔχειν διὰ τὰ μεγέθη τῶν ἀμαρτημάτων, τίς τις ἢ περισύκκοσα μοῖρα εἴπειν εἰς τὸν Τάβλαρον, ὅθεν ὑποὶ ἐκβαίνουσι. Plato in *Phæd.*

Ὡς περ σὺ κέλευσας διωκίης νομιζέας, ὅτε καὶ τῶν ἱερῶν κεινῶν ἐξηγῆται τελευταί τε καὶ μυσάγωγος. Celsus apud Origen. lib. 8.

(q) ——— Nam si certum finem esse viderent,  
Ærumnarum homines aliqua ratione valerent  
Religionibus atque minis obistere vatum :  
Nunc ratio nulla est restandi, nulla facultas,  
ÆTERNAS quoniam PŒNAS in morte timendum. Lib. 1.

(r) Humana ante oculos fœde cum vita jaceret, &c. *ibid.*

Long Time Men lay oppress'd with slavish Fear,  
Religion's Tyranny did domineer,  
Which, being plac'd in Heav'n, look'd proudly down,  
And frighted abject Spirits at her Frown.  
At last a mighty Man of Greece began  
To assert the natural Liberty of Man,  
By senseless Terrours, and vain Fancy led,  
To Slavery: freight the conquer'd Phant'ras fled. CREECH.



of Sin, to be afraid of Punishment. And, as one exceedingly versed in Human Nature has well remarked (1), our Hope is not so apt to be wrought upon by the Promises of Reward and Happiness, as our Fear is from the Apprehension of the Divine Displeasure. And therefore, tho' the Philosophers Doubts and Denial of a future State did very much obstruct the Progress of Religion, by lessening and abating the Hopes of future Reward; yet they could not, for the Reason now given, so effectually silence and dissipate the Fears of future Misery. And that they did not do so in Fact, is very manifest from the various and innumerable Sacrifices and Expiations for Sin, which did nevertheless prevail in the Heathen World, and made up the main Part of the Gentile Religion. And this is an Argument which the *Epicureans* must needs esteem to be of great Force, according to their favourite and admired Maxim, (*Primum in orbe Deos fecit timor*) it was to these natural Fears and Apprehensions of Men, that the very Being of the Gods themselves were owing.

Secondly, Whatever Notions the learned Philosophers (as far as they believed a future State) might entertain of the Rewards and Enjoyments of the next Life, yet it is certain, that the best of the Poets, by whom the common People were mostly influenced and directed, had made the Happiness of good Men after Death, (nay, and of the very Gods themselves also (2)) to consist in corporeal Enjoyments and sensual Pleasures. And how low and mean that happy State was commonly thought, appears from the Sentiments of *Achilles's* Ghost in *Homer* (lately taken Notice of by an Incom-

(1) Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 3.

(2) Non enim Ambrosia Deos, aut nectare, aut juventute pocula ministrante lætari arbitror, nec Homerum audia qui Ganymeden a diis raptum ait propter formam, ut Jovi pocula ministraret.

Cic. *Tuscul. Quest. lib. 1.*

comparable Critic (*u*) who, when he was complimented by *Ulysses*, as the happiest of Men both alive and dead, makes answer, That he had rather alive be a poor Day-labourer to the meanest Peasant, than be Emperor of all the Dead.

Ἡ πᾶσιν γενέσθαι κατὰ φύσιν ἀνασσειν.

Odyss. l. 490.

And then, *Thirdy*, there were many of those who really acknowledged a future State, and likewise asserted the Resurrection of the Body, who did yet peremptorily deny the Immortality of the Soul, and in Consequence hereof the eternal Happiness of good Men. This was the Opinion of the Generality of the *Stoicks* (*x*), a considerable Sect among the Philosophers; who, tho' they maintain'd that the Bodies of Men would be rais'd from the Dead, and re-united to their Souls (*y*), yet they asserted, that the Souls of Men were all material, and that some of them might be broken and destroyed immediately upon their Separation from the Body, and that the rest should have only a certain Permanency after Death, and should be entirely dissolv'd at the next Conflagration (*z*); at which Time they held, that the very Gods themselves should be corrupted, and their Personalities abolished and annihilated, and resolved into *Jupiter*, from whom they at first proceeded (*aa*). Tho' they had indeed also an

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(*u*) Phililenth. Lipsiens. Part I. p. 44.

(*x*) Stoici autem — diu mansuros aiunt animos, semper negant. Cic. *ibid*.

(*y*) Διῆλον ὡς ἐδὲν ἀδύνατον εἶναι ἡμᾶς μετὰ τὸ τελευτῆσαι πάλιν πεισθῆναι τινῶν εἰλυμένων χρόνῳ, εἰς ὃ νῦν ἐσμὲν ἀποκαταστήσεσθαι ζῆμα. Chrysippus de Providentia, apud Lactant. lib. vii. cap. 23. vide etiam Grot. de Veritat. &c. lib. ii. cap. 10.

(*z*) Vide Cudworth's Intellectual System, p. 419.

(*aa*) Cudworth, p. 425.

odd Notion, that the Souls of Men, as well as the Gods, would, after certain Conflagrations, be again brought into Being, and restored to their pristine State and Condition; and that there would be a periodical Succession of these Conflagrations and Renovations to all Eternity (bb). In which Notion they are said to be unhappily followed by *Origen*, if he really espoused that and some other absurd Opinions which are to be found in his Writings, which some very learned Men have thought there are good Reasons not to believe (cc). From all which it plainly appears, that the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality and a future State, as delivered in the most perfect Systems of Paganism (and which our modern Infidels often set in Opposition to, and in Comparison with the Christian Revelation upon this Head) was very obscurely and doubtfully asserted, and meanly supported, and administered but little Assurance and Comfort to Men in the Exercise of Religion. Whereas by the Gospel, we are not only secured of a *blessed Resurrection to Eternal Life*, Matth. xxv. ult. of a *Crown of Glory*, 1 Cor. ix. 25. and of an *Inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that passeth not away*, 1 Pet. i. 4. and have a sensible Confirmation thereof given to us by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the Dead (which is an Evidence peculiar to our Holy Religion (dd)),

c but

(bb) Φασι δ' οἱ ἀπὸ τῆς Στοᾶς καὶ ἀπὸ τῶν ἐκπύρων τὴν πάντας γίνεσθαι καὶ ἐξῆς αὐτῇ διακόσμησιν πάντ' ἀπαράλλακτα ἔχουσιν ὡς πρὸς τὴν ἐτέραν διακόσμησιν.

*Origen* adv. Celsum, lib. 5. Vide loc. See also *Cudworth*, *ibid.* and *Cave's Histor. literar.* vol. I. p. 76, 77.

(cc) See *Cave*, *ibid.* p. 77, 78. and *Lives of the Fathers*, p. 163, &c. *Maldonat.* in Matth. xxv. 41.

(dd) I suppose no Man will think that *Pythagoras's* concealing himself for seven Years, and then pretending that he had been in the other World, and return'd again to teach Men Philosophy, is to be compared to that certain Account we have both of the Death and Resurrection of our Saviour, who rose again with an immortal Body,

but we are further assured, that it is such a Happiness and Glory, as *Eyes bath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither bath it entred into the Heart of Man to conceive*, 1 Cor. iii. 9. Which is a Consideration that, methinks, should make all sober and serious Deists, who really believe the Doctrine of a future State, and are hearty Friends to the Cause of Religion and Virtue, and to the true Interest and Happiness of Mankind, to be very much inclined to, I can hardly forbear saying, to be in some Measure prejudiced in favour of such a Divine and Excellent Religion. But,

*Secondly*, As to those who are profess'd Christians, I earnestly beg of them, as they tender the Welfare and Salvation of their immortal Souls, as well as their Credit and Reputation in this World, to take the following Particulars into their most serious Thoughts; and they may, I imagine, be the more easily induced to this, since the deepest Consideration will not make the least Change and Alteration in the Nature of Things. If Matters are not in themselves of great Consequence and Importance, all the Consideration in the World will not render them such; and if they be really so, they ought, for that Reason, to be duly and seriously considered. And since the Question we are now upon is, Whether our whole Existence terminates in this Life, or whether there be a future State in which an eternal and inconceivable Happiness is reserved for the Righteous, and everlasting and unutterable Torments prepared for the Wicked; there is nothing which deserves a diligent Enquiry and Examination, if this does not. And,

*First,*

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dy, not to live in this World, and to die again, but to ascend in His glorified Body up to Heaven, there to live for ever, and never to die more: Which is so peculiar to our Saviour, that no Man yet ever had the Impudence to pretend to it.

Sherlock on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. p. 233, 234.



*First*, then, I earnestly beg all such Persons to consider, whether they do firmly believe and acknowledge the Truth and Certainty of that Gospel which they profess, and in which the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality and a future State is so clearly delivered. If they do believe it, let them call to mind, that the transgressing the Holy Rules and Precepts of it will not only bring the greatest Blemish upon their Character and Reputation, since there is nothing which deservedly renders Men so ridiculous and contemptible, as a manifest and deliberate Contradiction of their most solemn Engagements and Professions (which occasioned that remarkable Saying of *Picus Mirandula* (ee), viz. *That the speculative Atheist was the greatest Prodigy but one, and that was the practical Atheist* ) but they will also by this means expose themselves to a more heavy and severe Damnation, as is very evident from several plain and express Passages of Holy Scripture (ff). And if they do not heartily believe it, they would do well to examine carefully into the Proofs and Evidences of this excellent Religion, by reading some of the best Books which have been wrote upon this Subject, and never give over their Enquiries till they find that they are thoroughly and deeply rooted and grounded in the Persuasion and Acknowledgment thereof. For otherwise, if they have any considerable Doubts and Suspicions in their Minds relating to this Matter, they will scarcely be prevailed upon to practice the ordinary Duties, and much less to submit to the hard and painful Exercises of Religion, which in many Conditions and Circumstances will be strictly required of them; since what the Apostle hath observ'd of the Qualifications of

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Prayer,

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(ee) Vide *Hammond's Reasonableness of the Christian Religion* p. 1.

(ff) See particularly, *Matth.* xi. 10 to 25. *John* xv. 22. *Acts* xvii 30, 31. *Heb.* ii. 2, 3. *Chap.* x. 26, &c.

Prayer, will equally hold with regard to all other Christian Duties, viz. *The double-minded Man is unstable in all his Ways*, James i. 8. And for this Reason, since the Subject I am now treating upon is of all others the most important and momentous, there can nothing be said in Excuse of those Men who shall neglect to give it a deep and serious Consideration.

In the *second place*, I would mightily desire all such Persons, when they apply their Minds to the Examination of this great Point, that they would consider it impartially, and take the utmost Care to divest themselves of all Prejudice and corrupt Affections: For otherwise, if any vitious Inclination or impure Desire prevails in them, it will have a strange and powerful, tho' perhaps insensible Effect and Influence upon their Judgments. And it will be as impossible for them, in such a Case, to perceive and relish the plainest and clearest Truths, as for a weak and sore Eye to behold the brightest and most splendid Objects (gg). And it will be of great Use to them, in this particular Case, to recollect, that Truth hath not the least Dependance upon the Will as to its Reality, but only as to its Discovery: What a great Author hath judiciously observed concerning the Being of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, holding equally with regard to a future Judgment and everlasting Retributions, viz. *The Doctrine is either true, or it is not, before we begin to think of it* (bb). And therefore, if there be a future Judgment and everlasting Torments prepared for Sinners in another World, it will be of no Service at all to any Christians, nor administer the least Ground of Safety and Security to them in the Practice of Sin and Wickedness, that they have oftentimes great Doubts and Suspicions in their Minds concerning

(gg) Ὅσπερ γὰρ ὁφθαλμῷ ἀημῶντι καὶ ἡ καθαρευμένη τα  
σφιδεῖ φάσμα ἴδαν ἢ δύναντε ἕτως καὶ ψυχῇ μὴ ἀρετῇ κεκλή-  
μην τοῦ ἀληθείας ἐνοπτευεῖσθαι καὶ λ.Θ.

Hierogies in Pref. ad Pythag. Aur. Carm.

(bb) Tillotson, vol. I. p. 30. see the Place.

cerning the Truth of this important Doctrine; when, if they would carefully examine into their Hearts, they would find that those Doubts and Suspicions were not derived from any just and good Reasons, but from their own depraved and corrupt Affections.

*Thirdly*, I would farther entreat such Persons to consider the invaluable Nature and Excellency of the Soul, which too many Christians expose to the utmost Hazard and Danger, for the sake of the trifling Interests and Pleasures of this World. *It is not only made a little lower than the Angels*, Psal. viii. 5. *and created in the Image of God himself*, Gen. i. 27. but it hath also been *redeemed by the precious Blood of Christ*, 1 Pet. i. 19. than which nothing can possibly give us a greater Idea of the immense Worth and Dignity of it. And for this Reason *St Paul*, who himself was unquestionably the greatest Orator this World ever produced (*ii*), could not find a stronger Argument to dissuade Men from the heinous Sin of offending their Brother, than that hereby they would destroy him *for whom Christ died*, Rom. xiv. 15. And therefore, let all Christians consider well, before they give themselves up to the Pleasures of Sin, how they will reconcile it with common Prudence and Discretion, to part with so great and inestimable a Treasure at any rate, and much less *to sell it for nought*, as the Prophet speaks, *Isa. lii. 3.* since our Blessed Saviour, who best knew the Value of an Immortal Spirit, hath assured us, *that a Man would in no wise be profited*, i. e. he would suffer the greatest and most inconceivable Damage, *tho' he should gain the whole World, if for that he should lose his own Soul*, Matth. xvi. 2.

And, in the *fourth and last Place*, since after all that can be said, it must be acknowledged, that present and sensible Things have a greater Effect and Influence upon

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(ii) See Acts xiv. 11, 12. Διὰ τὴν ὃν Λυκάριος αὐτὸν ὑπέλαβον εἶναι Ἑρμῆν; τὸ μὲν ὃ θεὸς αὐτὸς νημιδῆσαι ἀπὸ ὧν σημείων ἐγένετο, τὸ δὲ τῶτον Ἑρμῆν, ἐκ ἐπίσταν' ἐκείνων ἐγένετο, ἀλλ' ἀπὸ τοῦ λόγου. Chrysost. de Sacerdotio, lib. iv. p. 195. Edit. Hughes. Vid. loc.

as than those which are future and spiritual (and I fear the very best of Men find this to be too true by their own Experience) in order therefore to remedy this great Inconvenience, and that the Considerations of a future Judgment and everlasting Retributions may more powerfully affect us, I would earnestly exhort and advise all Christians frequently to think and meditate upon these Points, and to set apart some particular Times and Seasons for a more than ordinary Regard and Attention to them. For which Meditation, that the Lord's Day is not only a fit and proper Opportunity, but also that it is the necessary and indispensable Duty of that holy Festival, I hope I have fully shewn in a Discourse upon that Subject: In one Chapter of which Book, I think I have clearly proved, that a close and regular Meditation upon these great Points of our Religion, is absolutely necessary to give them that Effect and Influence upon the Mind, which God design'd in the Revelation of them. At present, the better to ascertain and secure the beneficial Consequences of such Meditation, it will be of great Use and Service to them frequently to consider, that if the trifling and transitory Enjoyments of this World do often administer so much Pleasure and Satisfaction to their Minds, they must needs be infinitely delighted and transported with those Joys and Glories which shall be everlasting, and to which the most perfect and refined Entertainments of this Life do not bear the least Proportion. And the best Course that any Christians can take at present, to gain the Advantage of this Reflection, is to imagine now and then, as strongly as they can, that they were standing before the Great Tribunal ready to receive their final Doom; and that before the terrible Sentence of departing from God's Presence should be pronounced against them, they should have a clear and distinct View and Representation of the Glory and Happiness of the Heavenly Kingdom display'd unto them, and should see *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, and all the Prophets and righteous Men admitted into that Kingdom, and themselves thrust



thrust out for ever: And then from that vast Confusion and inexpressible Anguish and Self-indignation, which they may well conclude would immediately seize upon them at the Thoughts of the wretched and miserable Exchange which they have made, they may in some measure form a Judgment how they ought at present to be affected by the reasonable Fears and Apprehension of such a dreadful Loss and Damage; which, tho' they should shed Rivers of Tears in Sorrow and Concern for it, can never be repaired. And so, on the other side, if they would be any ways moved and influenced by the Threatnings of future and eternal Punishments, they must sit down and consider seriously with themselves, how wretched and uneasy and disconsolate they always are, when under the Sense of any sharp and acute Pains and Misery, especially if it be of long Continuance; and what a terrible Condition they would think it to be, were they now condemned any of them for their Sins and Iniquities, to endure the raging and perpetual Torment of the Gout, or Cholick, or Stone, for ten thousand Years. And yet, as a very pious and excellent Author well observes (*kk*), *What are any of these Pains to the Torments and Perpetuations of Hell, or the Duration of ten thousand Years to those Ages of Ages?*

It is in this Manner we ought frequently and seriously to think and meditate upon a future Judgment and everlasting Retributions; and from remembering how nightly we are affected by the short and trifling Pleasures and Pains of this Life, we should be led to consider the infinite Weight and Importance of those Beatitudes and Sufferings which will be everlasting. And unless something of this Nature be done by us, by frequent and profound Meditation (in the Method and Measure of which every one must be left to his own Prudence and Discretion) we may read the Bible as often as we please, and hear Sermons every Day of our Lives, and I will be bold to say, we shall be but little the better for them; and the Joys and Glories of Heaven, and the Pains and

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Torments

(*kk*) Ray's Physico-Theological Discourses, p. 445.

Torments of Hell, tho' it could be supposed that they were much greater than they are, will be nothing more to us than a mere Sound and Form of Words, and will never make such a deep and lasting Impression upon us, as is absolutely necessary to the constant and regular Practice of Piety and Virtue.

And thus much I thought proper to observe, by way of Preparation to the following Sermons, and that the Reader may receive the greater Benefit and Advantage from the Perusal of them. And if any one shall censure this Preface as being too long, and very disproportionate to the Discourses themselves, I shall only say this in Return, that as these Discourses were chiefly design'd for the common People, I thought it would be but to very little Purpose to represent to them the Arguments of a future Judgment, and the Qualities and Ingredients of Eternal Happiness and Misery, if I could not at the same Time prevail upon them to such a due and serious Consideration of these important Points, as is entirely necessary to give them their proper Force and Energy; since we find in Fact, that it is not for want of believing and acknowledging these great Truths, that the Generality even of profess'd Christians lead such careless, wicked and dissolute Lives, but for want of thinking frequently upon them, and seriously attending to the just Effects and Consequences of them. And as this was the true Reason why I have so long insisted upon this Matter in this Preface, so if what is here laid down shall be so far of use to any good Christian, as to engage him to such a deep and regular Meditation upon these great Articles of our Faith, which I am now going to treat upon, as shall render them effectual to the universal Practice of Piety and Virtue, and thereby in the End procure the Salvation of his immortal Soul, let him give God the Praise and Glory for the Benefit he hath received, and I have the End which I proposed in the writing of this Preface, and should in no wise repent of my Labour, tho' it were ten times longer than it is. 4 OC 58

# S E R M O N I.

## Concerning a Future Judgment.

### Acts xvii.

The former Part of 31st Verse.

*Because He hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the World in Righteousness.*

**I**N the foregoing Part of this Chapter we read, that St Paul disputed and preached at *Athens*, and instructed the *Athenians* in the true Nature of That God whom they ignorantly adored, and of That Service and Worship which was due to him; as viz. that He made this World by His Power, and governed It by His Providence; and that as He is Himself a Spiritual Being, He could not be worshipped by any sensible Images, but in a spiritual Manner. And upon this Occasion the Apostle observes, that tho' the natural Reason of Mankind might have led them to such a Sense of God and His Perfections, as would have directed them in the true Manner of worshipping Him, and fully shewn them the great Danger of Sin, and the Certainty of a future Judgment; yet since in Fact, thro' the Corruption of Man's Nature, the Weakness of Human Reasoning, and the Strength and Number of bad

Examples, the Generality of Mankind were sunk into an extreme Ignorance of these great Principles; it pleas'd God in His infinite Goodness to wink at this Ignorance, and upon those Accounts to pardon the Mistakes and Transgressions of Men; But now that God hath made a full and clear Revelation of His Will by *Jesus Christ*, and in particular hath discovered to us the Truth and Certainty of a Future Judgment; he will deal quite otherwise with Mankind. Now, saith the Apostle, *He commandeth all Men every where to repent, because He hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the World in Righteousness by That Man whom he hath ordained.* The Doctrine of a Future Judgment is of so great Weight, and hath such a Commanding Force and Influence upon our Affections, that where-ever it is duly received and entertained (especially by Us Christians, who acknowledge the Consequence of it to be an Eternal State of Inexpressible Happiness or Misery) it must needs be a most powerful Means to excite Men to repent of their Sins, and to amend their Lives, that thereby they may be qualified to appear before the great Tribunal.

In order then to bring about these good Ends, so absolutely necessary to the Happiness of Mankind, I shall at present discourse upon this great Article of our Faith, from the Words which I have read to you, *Because He hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the World in Righteousness.* That *Jesus Christ* is ordained of God to be the Judge of the Quick and Dead. That the Day of Judgment is to be at the End of the World; That all Mankind are to stand before His Seat of Judgment, and shall then give a strict Account of all their Actions done in the Body, &c. These Things are so plainly and frequently revealed in Holy Scripture, that it is impossible any Christian can be ignorant of them, and therefore it will be needless to insist upon them. I shall therefore at this Time only treat of a Future Judgment itself; and this because, tho' there is no Christian among us who will not readily acknowledge the Truth  
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of this Doctrine, yet it is much to be feared, there are but very few who duly and carefully attend to the vast Importance and Consequences thereof.

In speaking then to this Point, I shall first enquire what Proofs and Evidences we have of the Truth and Certainty of a Future Judgment; And, secondly, What Effect and Influence the Consideration of this Particular ought to have upon us. And,

*First*, What Proofs and Evidences we have of the Truth and Certainty of a Future Judgment. Now these Proofs and Evidences are of two Sorts. *1st*, Rational Proofs; and, *2dly*, such as are Historical. The first Kind of Proofs are such as are entirely drawn from the Testimony of Natural Reason; the second are derived from the Authority and Declarations of God's Word. And, *first* then, Let us enquire what Proofs and Evidences of a Future Judgment are to be drawn from the Testimony of Natural Reason. Now there are four Things of this Kind, which have been always thought by the wisest of Men to be sufficient Proofs, or at least very clear and strong Intimations of this Matter.

*1st*. That Man is by Nature an accountable Creature, *2dly*. The Natural Presages of Man's Conscience, *3dly*. The Essential Difference between Good and Evil, together with the Natural Notions which we have of God: And *4thly*, and *lastly*, The External Appearances of Providence in the Administration and Government of this World. I shall speak as briefly as I well can to each of them (*a*). And,

*First*, It is a good Evidence and Intimation of a Future Judgment, that Man is by Nature an accountable

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Creature.

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(*a*) If the Reader would desire to see these Particulars fully considered and enlarged upon, he may find it done to his Satisfaction in Dean Sberlock's Excellent Discourse concerning a Future Judgment.

**Creature.** Now there are four Properties or Qualifications, which are necessary to render any Being accountable; all which may justly be ascribed to the State and Condition of Mankind.

The first Qualification is, That he be endued with a Principle of Reason, *i. e.* that he be sensible of the Difference between Good and Evil; that he can consider the Nature and Consequences of his Actions, and understand the particular Ends and Designs which he aims at in the doing of them. It is for Want of this Property, that the Brute Creatures are not accountable: For being led entirely by Instinct, *i. e.* by a strong and invariable Impression made on them by their Creator, by which they are carried on to their proper Actions, without any distinct Knowledge of the End and Design of them; they are therefore not accountable for them. And upon the same Ground Ideots and Madmen are not accountable, inasmuch as they are not induced to those Things which they do by any Principle of Knowledge and Reason, but by a strong and violent Impulse of Fancy and Imagination. But Man is endued with a Principle of Reason, he is duly sensible of the Difference between Good and Evil. When he performs any Actions, he does or may understand for what Ends and Designs he performs them, and what are the true Nature and Consequences of them; and therefore he is accountable to God for them.

The second Qualification which renders any Being accountable, is, That he hath a Law given to him as the Rule and Measure of his Actions. Without this all Actions are indifferent; it being a Maxim of Eternal Reason what St Paul observes, *Rom. iv. 15. Where there is no Law, there is no Transgression.* But now Man hath a Law given to him by God, to be the Rule of his Actions: And this Law is very plain and easy to be understood; It is interwoven in the very Frame of his Nature, and written in Mens Hearts, as the Apostle speaks, *Rom. ii. 15.* And those who enjoy the  
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Light of Holy Scripture, have yet a further Law given to them therein by divine Revelation; and therefore, since Man hath a Law given to him by God, by which he may guide and regulate his Actions, he is accountable to God for the Transgression of it.

The third Thing which makes any Being to become accountable, is, That he be not impelled to any Thing which he performs by Necessity or Fate, but that he be endued with a Principle of Liberty and Freedom in the Choice of his Actions. Whatever Being acts by Necessity, cannot in a Moral Sense be so properly said to act, as to be acted upon by that which is the Cause of such Necessity. But Man hath no Force or Necessity laid upon him in any of his Moral Actions; he is absolutely at Liberty to act as he pleases; he not only understands the Difference between Good and Evil, but he hath sufficient Power, by the Assistance of God's Grace, to refuse the Evil, and to choose the Good; *Isa. vii. 15.* and therefore, if in this Matter he makes a wrong Choice, he shall be answerable to God for the Abuse of his Liberty.

*Fourthly and lastly,* The other Qualification which will render any Being accountable for his Actions, is, That he be an Inferiour and Dependent Being, subject to the Authority and Dominion of some other Person. Without this Dependency of some upon others, all Beings will be alike. I do not mean that in this Case any of them will have a Right to transgress the Laws of Nature and Reason, which will be for ever obligatory upon the highest Governour, as well as the meanest Subject in the Universe. But I mean that in case of such Transgression, if there be no Superiority of Power and Dominion in some above others, there will be no one who will have a proper Right and Authority to call others to an Account for so doing. Man is therefore plainly an accountable Creature, as he is immediately dependent upon God, his great Creator and supreme Lord and Governour. And God hath given him such evident  
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Signs and Tokens of this his Dependence upon Him, not only by many and clear Discoveries of the Relation which he bears to Him, but also by the most manifest Convictions of the absolute Weakness and Insufficiency of his Condition, without the continual Interposition of His good Providence, that he must needs be in a great Measure sensible of it; and therefore if he who is thus entirely subject to the Authority of God, as his Creator and Governour, and depends every Moment upon His good Providence, shall violate His Laws, and transgress His Commandments, he may reasonably expect to be called to an Account for so doing.

Since then Man is thus plainly an accountable Creature, we may from hence easily discover the Truth and Certainty of a Future Judgment. For since Man is accountable for his Actions, and God Himself, the Creator of all Things, hath made him so, we have surely very good Reasons to conclude, that He will call him to an Account for them: Otherwise, God in dealing with Man would not consider him as he really is, nor treat him according to that Nature and those Properties with which He hath endued him, which is absurd to suppose of such a Being, as is infinite in Wisdom as well as Power; and in the Event would make little or no Distinction between the Condition of Mankind and the brutal World. Since then it is manifest, that God will call Men to an Account for their Actions, and since (as will be seen hereafter) this is not done in any tolerable Measure in this Life, it remains, that there must be a Future State, in which all Men shall be brought to Judgment, and finally rewarded or punished according to their Works. But,

*Secondly,* Another Proof of a Future Judgment, which we have from Reason, is taken from the Natural Presages of Man's Conscience, *i. e.* the secret Pleasure and Delight which Men take in doing Good, and the secret Uneasiness and Torment which springs up in their Minds from doing Ill; the Natural Hopes which they



they conceive of God's Love and Favour from the one, and the Natural Horror and Dread of His Displeasure from the other. That there are such Natural Presages in the Consciences of Mankind, the very Atheists themselves will not deny: They are often sensible of the Power and Influence of them in Themselves, as well as other Men. But then they affirm, that these Presages are not owing to Nature, but to the Force of Custom and Education, and to the Craft and Policy of Princes; in which Position they have been sufficiently confuted by many Learned Men (b): and I am well assured, that I could easily shew the Folly and Absurdity of that Notion, if it were worth my while to do so. I shall only observe at present, that if any Man will look abroad into the World, and see what passes in the Minds of other Men as well as his own, he will soon be convinced of this Truth; and will judge with the Prophet, That, as on the one Side, *the Wicked are like the troubled Sea, when it cannot rest; and, there is no Peace to the Wicked;* so on the other Side, *the Work of Righteousness shall be Peace, and the Effect of Righteousness, Quietness and Assurance for ever.* Isa. lvii. 20. 21. chap. xxxii. 17. And indeed this Notion is so natural and agreeable to the best Sense and Judgment of Mankind, that in the Writings of the most ancient Philosophers as well as the Poets, we have many large and excellent Passages in Proof of it, which are continually referred to by Divines, when they treat upon this Subject. Now these natural Presages in the Consciences of Men do not only shew, that they really believe and acknowledge a Future Judgment, and con-

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(b) Quid? Si qui dixerunt totam de Diis Immortalibus Opinionem fictam esse ab Hominibus sapientibus Reipublicæ Causa, ut quos Ratio non posset, eos ad Officium Religio duceret: Nonne omnem Religionem funditus sustulerunt? Cic. de Nat. Deor. lib. i. S. c. alio Dr Cudworth's *Intellect. System*: p. 691, &c. Tillotson, Vol. I. p. 18. Bishop Leng's *Boyle's Lectures*, Sermon V.

firm all the other natural Arguments thereof, which are drawn from Man's being made an accountable Creature, from the Essential Difference between Good and Evil, and from the unequal Distributions of God's Providence in this Life; (for otherwise there could be no just Ground for these Presages in the Mind) but they are also of themselves a clear and full Intimation of the Truth and Certainty of this Doctrine. For since the Wise Creator of all Things hath implanted such strong Suspicions and Apprehensions of a Future Judgment in the Minds of Men, we may rationally conclude from hence, that there will be such a Future Judgment; for otherwise He hath implanted these Apprehensions in Mens Minds utterly in vain, and they will in the End prove nothing but Disappointment and Delusion. But such a Thought as this is very unworthy of God, of whose Works we may justly say, that *in Wisdom He hath made them all*; Psal. civ. 24. and adjusted them in the most exact Order, Measure and Proportion.

*Thirdly*, Another natural Proof and Evidence of a Future Judgment is taken from the Essential Difference between Good and Evil together with the natural Notions which we have of God. That there is an Essential Difference between Good and Evil, founded in the Nature of Things, without any Regard to positive Law and Institution, *i. e.* that some Things are in their own Nature good and beneficial to Mankind, and others naturally evil and destructive to them, is so plain and obvious a Truth, that it hath never been called in Question but by Atheists and Infidels; and those Persons who have denied it, have always run themselves into an express Contradiction upon this Point, as all the Learned Defenders of natural Religion have clearly shewn. And indeed That Man must be utterly abandoned and destitute of common Sense and Reason, who will deny, that the Practice of Moral Righteousness and Equity, of Friendship, and Peaceableness, and Charity, are good in themselves, and tend to the Benefit

ness and Happiness of Human Society; and on the other Side that Unrighteousness and Perfidy, and Uncharitableness and Cruelty, are in themselves Evil, and effect the Ruin and Destruction of it. Since then there is such an Essential Difference between Good and Evil, we may hence discover a very clear Proof and Intimation of a Future Judgment.

For it hath ever been the natural Sense and Thought of Mankind, that what is Good should be rewarded, and what is Evil punished; and moreover, since God who is a most exact Observer of Mankind, is Himself Essentially Holy, and since the essential Holiness of God manifestly implies, that He is a great Lover of Good Men, and hath the utmost Abhorrence of such as are Evil; (which He could not with any Propriety be said to be, if He should not make a suitable Distinction between them by Rewards and Punishments) and since, as hath been already observed, this is not sufficiently accomplish'd in this Life, it clearly follows that it shall be fully perfected and compleated in the Life to come, when all Men shall be brought before the righteous Tribunal of God, and finally judged according to their Deserts.

*4thly* and *lastly*, The last Proof and Evidence which we naturally have of a Future Judgment, is taken from the External Appearances of God's Providence in the Government of the World. Now that God is no unconcerned Spectator of Human Affairs, but that He does at present pass a Judgment upon the Actions of Men, hath been frequently inferred from several Considerations, as particularly from God's making Men of such a Nature and Frame, as that natural Good and Evil shall be the certain Consequence of moral Good and Evil, *i. e.* that Men shall be always in a great Measure made Happy or Miserable, according as they live, either in the Practice of Virtue or Wickedness, and that from the natural Tendency of Virtue or Vice to the Happiness or Misery of Mankind. *2dly*. From

the inward Judgment of Conscience which Men pass upon their Actions, as was before remarked. 3dly, From the Institution of Civil Government for the Restraint and Coercion of Vice and Wickedness; and last of all, from the frequent Interpositions of Providence in the rewarding of good Men, and the Punishment of the wicked. And that God hath thus frequently interposed in all Ages of the World, is very clear and evident from the Experience of Mankind, and from all History both ancient and modern. And in the *Jewish* History, as delivered in the Bible, which (setting aside its Divine Authority) might upon many Accounts be easily proved to be more credible and certain than any other History, we see this Truth made evident to a Demonstration: For therein we find that God did for many Years together preside over That People, as their sole and immediate Governour, and constantly interpose by present Rewards or Punishments, according to their Behaviour; Insomuch that Men might justly say with the Psalmist: *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous, doubtless there is a God that judgeth the Earth.* Psal. lviii.

II. Since then it is very manifest, that God does at present judge the World, we may with good Reason conclude, that He will judge it hereafter; unless the Judgment of God in this present World is peremptory and final, which it cannot be for this plain Reason, because tho' in many Cases God does at present judge the Actions of Men, yet there are also very many in which He does not seem to judge them at all. Tho' He often interposes by immediate Rewards and Punishments, there are nevertheless many good Men left unrewarded, and many Evil Men unpunished. Innocence is too frequently abused and oppressed, while the Oppressor glories and triumphs in his Villany. Many of the best and most righteous Persons are persecuted even for Righteousness sake, and exposed to the heaviest and most severe Afflictions, whilst at the same Time many of the most profligate and abandoned Sinners do flourish and



and abound in all worldly Happiness and Prosperity. This is a Truth that hath been carefully observed in all Ages of the World; (c) and we find the *Psalmist* himself bitterly complaining of it. *Psal.* lxxiii. Now, not to mention that many wise and good Reasons may at present be given for this Dispensation, we may from hence, and from what hath been said upon this Head, discover a clear Proof and Intimation of a Future Judgment. For since, as I have already shewn, God judges the Actions of Men at present, and since this His Judgment is not Final, it is very evident that God does now judge the World no further than is necessary to the Well-being and Government thereof; but reserves the full and compleat Distribution of Justice to the next Life; in which all the Difficulties of Providence shall be explained, all the Irregularities rectified, and all Things settled and adjusted according to the Everlasting Laws of Wisdom, Righteousness and Truth.

These are the natural Proofs and Evidences which we have of a Future Judgment: And they are so very rational and agreeable to the best Sense and Apprehension of Mankind, that we find all Men in all Ages of the World (some few Infidels excepted) have agreed in the Belief and Acknowledgment of this great Principle (d). But tho' the ancient *Pagans* did assent to the Doctrine of a Future Judgment, and inferred the Truth

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(c) Dies deficiat, si velim numerare quibus bonis male evenerit; nec minus, si commemorem, quibus improbis optime. *Cic. de Nat. Deorum.* lib. iii.

Non hic tempora nostra querimus ut solent infelices, aut Sæculum hodiernum præ aliis Ferreum dicimus: Antiquum obtinet Mundus. Consule omnium temporum, omnium gentium Fastos, *Romanos, Græcos*, quoscunque velis, ubique reperies *Socratas & Catones*, viros eximios, moribus animique dotibus & indole singulares, iniqua sorte oppressos. Hos odit vulgus prophanum & obstreperum: Calumniis insectantur invidi. Nec facile patiuntur liberale ingenium, virtutis & veritatis tenax, re um potentes & tyranni. Hic re um nostrarum status, *Burnet, de Statu Mortuorum & Resurgentium.* cap. 2. p. 4. *Id.* etiam *Simplic. in Epictetum.* cap. 38. p. 212.

(d) See *Pearson* of the Creed with the Notes. p. 295.

of it from the Reasons and Arguments before-mentioned; yet there were but few in Comparison, who were able to deduce these Arguments and Observations; and therefore the main Ground which the Generality of the *Heathens* had for this Belief, was the Tradition of their Ancestors. And moreover the Philosophers themselves did often express great Doubts and Uncertainty about the Truth of this Matter, and the Doctrine of a Future Judgment was so darkened and obscured by the Fictions of the Poets, that upon these Accounts it had but little Force and Influence upon the Minds of Men; insomuch that after all that can be said, the most convincing and effectual Proof of this Doctrine, is to be taken from Divine Revelation; which is the second Thing I proposed to consider in Testimony and Conviction thereof.

Now as to the Old Testament, it must be owned that we have not such clear Proofs and Evidences of a Future Judgment from That, as we have from the New Testament; since the express Promises and Threatnings of the Law did only relate to Temporal Things. But still we may justly conclude, that the *Jews* had many more and much greater Reasons to believe this Doctrine, than the *Gentiles* had. For besides that there are some Passages in the Law and the Prophets (e), and particularly that in *Dan.* vii. 13. which some learned Men (f) think may have a Relation to this Matter, they had,

1<sup>st</sup>, A perfect Demonstration of Divine Providence in the Government of their Nation, as hath been already observed. And, as you have heard, the Belief of a Providence naturally and strongly implies the Belief of a Future Judgment. In the next Place, they had several Arguments

(e) See *Lezorth* in his Argument to the 24th chap. of *Isaiab*, and his Annotations on chap. xiii 10. *Pearson* on the Creed, p. 296.

(f) Vid *Maldonat.* ap *Pol Synops. Critic. in loc.* Bishop *Pearson* on the Creed p. 293. *Grot.* in *Matt.* xxvi 64.

Arguments and Proofs of a Future State, which were clearer and more evident than those which the *Heathens* were acquainted with (g): As particularly the Covenant which God made with *Abraham*, and afterwards with the whole *Jewish* Nation, which plainly implies something more than the Temporal Enjoyment of the Land of *Canaan* (b), as *St Paul* fully shews in *Hebr.* xi. and as the wisest among the *Jews* always thought (i).

2dly, The Translation of *Enoch* and *Elias* into Heaven, which was a very lively and sensible Representation of a Future State.

3dly, The many Passages and Promises both in the Law and the Prophets, which were manifestly figurative, and signified some great Blessings and Advantages beyond what was contained in the Letter of them.

And, 4thly and lastly, They had a remarkable Passage in the Prophet *Daniel*, (chap. xii. 2.) wherein the Resurrection of the Dead, both Just and Unjust, in order to be eternally rewarded or punished according to their Deeds, is expressly asserted. In the firm Belief and Confidence of which great Truth was founded that admirable Patience and Constancy of the seven Brethren and their Mother, who suffered in a most cruel and unheard of Manner under *Antiochus Epiphanes*, for refusing to break the Laws of *Moses*, 2. *Maccab* (k).

I am sensible indeed, that *Porphry*, that bitter Enemy of the Christian Religion, who exerted all his Strength and Parts to invalidate the Authority of *Daniel's* Prophecy, (l) applied the Sentence we are now considering to the Restoration and Deliverance of the *Jews* from the Oppression and Persecution

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(g) See *Sherlock* on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. chap. iii.

(b) See *Dr Clarke's* Connexion of the Prophecies, p. 4. &c. *Sherlock* on the Immortality of the Soul, &c. chap. iii. § 4. where this Matter is very fully and clearly made out. (i) Vid. *Lorath* on *Isaiah*, lxxv. 4. (k) Vid. *Pol. Synops. Criticor.* and *Whitby*, on *Matt.* xxii. 32. (l) Vid. *Prideaux's* Connexion vol. III. p. 291, &c.

tion of the King of Syria. And the learned *Grotius* concurs with him in this Interpretation; but yet so as to think that the Words are so judiciously moderated and qualified, as to hint and refer to the Doctrine of the General Resurrection at the last Day (*m*). But that this Construction of *Porphyry* is wholly without Ground, and that the Prediction of *Daniel* in this Place cannot possibly be understood of any Thing else than the said General Resurrection, hath been by several learned Men very fully demonstrated (*n*). All these Particulars were surely very weighty and forcible Arguments and Evidences to the *Jews*, that there would be a Future State after this Life, and a Future State does strongly imply a Future Judgment; since Men are called out of this World into the other, not to be made happy or miserable at the arbitrary Will and Pleasure of God, but to be rewarded or punished according to their Works: And upon these Accounts there is no Doubt to be made, but that the ancient *Jews* did believe the Doctrine of a Future Judgment, as well as that there would be a Future State: And accordingly we find that those Words of God to *Cain*, *Gen. iv. 7. If thou doest well, shalt thou not be accepted? And if thou doest not well, Sin lieth at the Door*, are by the most ancient *Jewish* Interpreters understood to signify a Reservation of his Sin unto the Day of Judgment (*o*). And we may observe more expressly, that before the Flood *Enoch* prophesied of a Judgment to come, saying; *Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his Saints; to execute Judgment upon all, &c. Jude, xiv. 15. (p)* which Words, tho' they might more immediately relate to the Waters of the Deluge, yet had doubtless a farther

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(*m*) Vid. *Grot.* in loc.

(*n*) Vid. *Lowth* and *Pal. Synops. Critic.* in loc. Dr *Whitby* in *Acts*, xxvi. 6, 7.

(*o*) Vid. *Pearson* on the Creed, p. 296. Bishop *Patrick* on *Gen.* iv. 8. (*p*) Vid. *Grot.* in loc.



farther View and principal Regard to the Great and General Day of Judgment, and to the Destruction of the World by Fire, as a most learned Prelate well observes (q): To which we may add That remarkable Testimony of a Future Judgment, which we meet with in the Book of *Judith*, chap. xvi. 17. which doubtless relates to the last and General Day of Judgment, because in the same Verse the Eternal Punishment and Torment of her Enemies is thereto adjoined and emphatically described.

But tho' it pleased God to give the *Jews* several strong Intimations and satisfactory Evidences of a Future Judgment, the more effectually to incline them to their Duty and Obedience to Him, yet it must be acknowledged, that they are in no wise to be compared with those clear and express Declarations which are made to us of this Matter in the New Testament. For there it is said in plain and direct Terms, *That it is appointed unto Men once to die, but after this the Judgment.* Heb. ix. 27. And in the Words of the Text, *That God hath appointed a Day in which He will judge the World in Righteousness.* We have also an Account therein, That this Day of Judgment is to be at the End of the World, and that all Men that ever lived, of what Quality and Condition soever, shall be brought before the Judgment-Seat; 2 Cor. v. 10. It is also declared who is to be our Judge, namely the Lord *Jesus Christ.* John v. 22. Acts xvii. 31. The Manner and Circumstances and Solemnity of His coming to Judgment are also fully set forth and described to us, as viz. *That He shall come suddenly and unexpectedly, as a Thief in the Night;* 2 Pet. iii. 10. *That He shall come with the Sound of the Archangel, and with the Trump of God.* 1 Thess. iv. 16. And that He shall be attended by his mighty Angels, 2 Thess. i. 7. And come with ten Thou-  
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(q) Bishop Pearson, *ibid.*

*land of His Saints, Jude xiv.* And to say no more, the Nature and Design of this Judgment and the important Consequences of it are fully display'd and represented to our Minds, as *viz.* That all Men shall be judged for all the Things which they have done in the Body, *2 Cor. v. 10.* and shall be sentenced to a State of Everlasting Happiness or Misery, according to their Works; *Matt. xxv. ult.* All these Particulars relating to the Future Judgment are so clearly discovered, and so frequently repeated in the New Testament, that it is impossible for any one to be in the least acquainted with this Holy Book, and to be ignorant of them.

And thus I have shewn you what Proofs and Evidences we have of the Doctrine of a Future Judgment, I proceed now in the second Place to consider what Effect and Influence the Belief and Acknowledgment of a Future Judgment ought to have upon us. And,

*First,* In general, the Belief of a Future Judgment should make us live under a constant Awe and Sense of it, and so frequently and seriously to think and reflect upon it, till it hath gained a due and regular Influence upon our whole Conduct and Behaviour. To this End we should set a-part some particular Times and Seasons for a more than ordinary Meditation upon this great Point, and consider thoroughly with ourselves the Nature and Consequences of this Judgment, and of what mighty Importance it will be to our Happiness to be well prepared for it, that so we may be prevailed upon thereby to a Life of universal Goodness and Virtue.

But to be a little more particular: The Belief of this Doctrine of a Future Judgment should chiefly and principally affect us in these four Respects:

*1st,* We should hence be persuaded to refer all Difficulties in the Administration of God's Providence to the Day of Judgment. There are, it must be confess'd, many and great Difficulties in Divine Providence, which have baffled the Wit of Mankind in all Ages of the World; and the diving too far into which,  
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hath been of the most mischievous Consequence to the Souls of Men, as it hath thrown some Men into Melancholy and Desperation, and others into Atheism and Infidelity : Such as the Case of the fallen Angels, and that of *Adam* in Paradise ; the extreme and universal Corruption which ensued ; the many Ages that passed before the promised *Messiah* came, and the many Nations which are still left in *Pagan* Darknes since His Coming ; the great Impiety and Wickedness of the Generality of Christians under the Guidance and Assistance of an Infinite and All-powerful Spirit (r) ; the innumerable Evils and Afflictions of this present Life ; and especially the extreme Sufferings of many of the very best and most righteous Men (and this oftentimes for the Sake of their Piety and Virtue) whilst many of the vilest and most profligate Sinners do flourish and abound in all Manner of Happiness and Prosperity ; And above all, the exquisite and in tolerable Punishments which are prepared for the Wicked in the next Life, together with the Eternal Duration of them. All these, it must be owned, are very great Difficulties in Providence, and such as (tho' there may be sufficient Satisfaction to be given in every one of them to the Cavils and Objections of Infidels (s) ; yet) we shall never be able fully to clear up and explain in this World.

Now the only way that I know of in this Case, both to prevent our falling into Atheism and Desperation, and to preserve that Reverence which is due to the Counsels of God, is to leave all these Difficulties in

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Providence

(r) See *Tillotson*, vol. II. p. 469, &c.

(s) See Dr *Coneybeare's* and Mr *Simon Brown's* Answers to *Christianity as old as the Creation*, in which all that Author's Objections against Revelation under these Heads are fully answered and confuted. And as to the main Objection of that Author concerning the Christian Revelation not being in Fact Universal, see particularly Dr *S. Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part II. Prob. 7. §. 4. *Sherlock* on Providence, 4to. chap. iv. p. 133. *Gordon's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, p. 412. &c. Dr *Coneybeare's* Defence, chap. viii.

Providence to the Day of Judgment; and then when God shall come to judge the World, He will give such clear and abundant Demonstrations of His Infinite Wisdom, Righteousness and Goodness in the Administration and Government of the Universe, that all Men and Angels shall be fully convinced of the Justice and Equity of all His Proceedings: And in the Words of the Psalmist, *He shall be justified in his Sayings, and clear when he is judged. Psal. li. 4.* But,

*Secondly,* The Belief of a Future Judgment ought to make us take a most especial Care that we do not indulge ourselves in any secret Sins. And there are many Persons who have great Need to be particularly caution'd in this Matter; they are very loth and unwilling to do any Thing amiss in the Sight of Men, because they are very sensible they shall be severely censur'd and reproach'd for so doing; but they care not how many base and vile Practices they are guilty of when they are in Secret: And tho' they must needs acknowledge in some measure, that God sees them at such a Time, and is much offended and displeased with them, yet by some means or other they have but very little Regard to His Inspection, when they are retired from the World; and moreover they readily call to Mind, that God is infinitely merciful, and therefore they make no doubt but that He will freely pardon them upon their true Repentance. But now, not to mention that nothing can be more provoking to God than when Men shew a less Respect and Reverence to His Majesty, than they do to one another, and therefore that by His wise and just Providence Men are often brought to an open Shame and Punishment in this World for those very Crimes which they thought they might safely commit in Secret; I say, not to mention this, the Folly and Danger of this Conduct is evident from hence, that God sees us as well when we are in our most private Recesses, and takes as much Notice of our Actions, as when we commit them upon the open Theatre



Theatre of the World: *For the Darknes is no Darknes with Him, but the Night is as clear as the Day; the Darknes and Light to Him are both alike: Psal. cxxxix. 12.* and therefore it is not the least Security to us in the Practice of Sin, that we commit it in Secret; for God plainly observes and discovers all that we do, and *will bring every Work into Judgment, with every secret Thing whether it be good or evil. Eccl. xii. 14.*

*Thirdly,* Since we shall all be judged at the last Day for all our Actions, this should make us extremely careful that we do not fall into the horrid Sin of censuring and judging other Men. And this is a Matter of which the greatest Part of Mankind have great Need to be severely admonished; there being but very few Persons who are not in a greater or less Measure guilty of this Sin. Men are not content to judge others upon clear and manifest Convictions of Guilt, but also to pass Sentence upon them and condemn them heavily upon the slightest Circumstances and most distant Suspicions; nay, and oftentimes without the least Suspicion at all, upon the sole Ground of popular Report and Testimony. But now such Persons should well consider, That this Sin of Rash Judgment is not only very great in itself, as it is founded in downright Injustice; but also that it is of the most dangerous Consequence to themselves, as thereby they increase the Weight and Burthen of their own Sentence at the great Day. For thus we are assured by Christ himself, the Supreme Judge of Mankind; and from this very Argument He cautions us against the dangerous Sin of Calumny and Censure. *Judge not (says he) that ye be not judged. For with what Judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged; and with what Measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. Matt. vii. 1, 2.* And the Apostle assures us, *That he shall have Judgment without Mercy, who hath shewed no Mercy. Jam. ii. 13.*

*Fourthly and lastly,* Since we must all appear before the Judgment Seat of Christ, let us be exceedingly

careful to prepare ourselves for that Judgment, by a frequent Examination of ourselves, and by a sincere Repentance of all our Sins, and a Life of universal Holiness and Purity: Since nothing else will recommend us to the Favour of our Judge at that great and dreadful Day. Let us diligently improve all the Talents with which God hath entrusted us; because we are not Proprietors but Stewards; and God will then require us to give an Account of our Stewardship. Let us also watch narrowly over our Thoughts, because God will bring every secret Thing into Judgment. Eccl. xii. 14. *And take Heed to our Ways, that we offend not with our Tongues.* Because our Lord hath declared to us, *That by our Words we shall be justified, and by our Words we shall be condemned; nay, and That every Idle Word which Men shall speak, they shall give an Account thereof in the Day of Judgment.* Matt. xii. 36, 37. And above all, let us take heed that we abound in all the Graces and Fruits of the Blessed Spirit, and particularly that of Love to all our Brethren, and Charity to the Poor; since by this Means we shall in an especial Manner obtain the Favour of our Great Judge at the last Day, as He Himself hath assured us; *Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my Brethren, ye have done it unto Me.* Matt. xxv. 45. And by this kind Distribution of our Charity, we shall recommend ourselves powerfully to the Love of God, and lay up in Store for ourselves a good Foundation against the Time to come, that we may lay hold on Eternal Life. Which God of His Infinite Mercy grant to us all, for Jesus Christ His Sake. Amen.

# S E R M O N II.

Concerning the Future Punishment  
of the Wicked.

Matthew xxv.

The former Part of the 46th Verse.

*And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.*

**I**N my last Discourse I treated at large concerning the Doctrine of a Future Judgment, in which I shew'd you the Proofs and Evidences of this Doctrine, both from Natural Reason, and the Holy Scripture; and what Effect and Influence the Belief and Expectation thereof ought to have upon us. I shall now discourse to you of That which will be the Consequence of this Judgment, viz. the dreadful and inconceivable Sufferings and Torments of wicked Men in the next World, from the Words of our Saviour in the Text, *And these shall go away into Everlasting Punishment.* And indeed I do not know of any one Consideration which can be more powerful and effectual than This, to reclaim Men from their Sins and Impieties, and to excite them to the Practice of Religion and Virtue.

Virtue. For if the Belief and Apprehension of Eternal Misery hath no Effect upon Men, I do not know what will. And for this Reason *St Paul* calls the Gospel of Christ *the Power of God unto Salvation, i. e. a very powerful Means* which God hath ordained for that good Purpose, because, says he, *the Wrath of God is therein revealed from Heaven against all Ungodliness and Unrighteousness of Men*, Rom. i. 16, 18.

That this great Article of our Faith therefore may awaken Men to a due Sense of their Sins, and the more effectually persuade them to their Duty and Obedience, I shall at this Time treat distinctly of this Point; and from the Words which I have read to you shall first consider, wherein consists the terrible and dreadful Nature of those Punishments which are prepared for the Incurable in another World. And then secondly, what a strong and mighty Persuasive the Belief of those Punishments carries in it to a Holy and Religious Life. And,

*First* then, Wherein consists the terrible and dreadful Nature of those Punishments which are prepared for the Incurable in the next World. Now there are five Things laid down in Holy Scripture, as Representations and Ingredients of that Misery which shall be inflicted upon the Damned. *1st*, They shall be eternally separated from the Presence of God, the Fountain of all Happiness and Joy. *2dly*, They shall be tormented with all that Uneasiness and Vexation of Mind, which arises from the Sense of a Guilty Conscience, and from those many raging Lusts and Passions which they shall carry with them into another World. *3dly*, They shall be confined to that dismal and loathsome Place, which the Scripture calls by the Name of *Hell*, and to the direful and horrid Company of the Devil and his Angels. *4thly*, They shall be punished and afflicted with the exquisite and intolerable Pains and Torments of *Hell-Fire*. And *5thly and lastly*, They shall be subject to all these unspeakable Miseries and Sufferings, not  
for



for a few Years only, or for Ages, but for ever. *These shall go away into EVERLASTING Punishment.*

And *first* then, the dreadful Misery and Punishment of the Wicked in the next Life shall consist in their being eternally separated from the Presence of God, the Fountain of all Joy and Happiness. And this is the first Part of that Sentence which shall be executed upon the Wicked, as our Lord hath declared to us; *Depart from me, ye Cursed. Matt. xxv. 41.* And indeed the Misery and Sorrow, which is contained in these Words, no one can possibly imagine or describe. For to be finally separated from God is to be separated from Him, who is the sole Author of all Delight and Comfort, as He is the Creator of all Things, and as all Things do immediately depend upon Him. What the Sun is to the natural World, That and infinitely more is the Presence of God to the *Intellectual*; and as upon withdrawing the Light of the Sun, the Earth would immediately become barren, the Plants and Flowers wither, the Fruits of the Ground decay, the Animals languish and die, and an universal Horror and Darkness ensue; so, should God withdraw His Favour and Countenance from the Universe, all Intelligent Beings would in one Moment be filled with Vexation and Grief, Uneasiness and Discontent, and an unmeasurable Dread and Anguish would seize upon them. The Holy Scriptures, when speaking of God's Presence, always represent it to us in this Light. He is there said to be *the Giver of every good Gift. James i. 17.* He is called *the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation. 2 Cor. i. 3.* *When He openeth His Hand, all Things are filled with Good; and when He hideth His Face, they are troubled. Psal. civ. 28, 29.* Well therefore might the *Psalmist* cry out, *Whom have I in Heaven but Thee, and there is none upon Earth that I desire in Comparison of Thee. Psal. lxxiii. 25.* And therefore surely to be cast away from His Presence must be

a very sensible Degree of Sorrow and Misery, as it is a total Deprivation of all Happiness and Joy.

But moreover, to be separated from God is not only to be separated from that great and good Being, who hath all the Treasures of the Universe in His Hands, but from Him also, who is our supreme Creator, and who created us for this End, that He might make us for ever happy. It is to be parted from Him, who hath not only *upholden us ever since we were born*, *Psal. lxi. 6.* but hath enriched us continually with the Blessings of His Providence; from Him, who is so kind and endearing to us, as to call Himself our Father, not only as He hath made us, and provided for us, but also as He hath adopted us for His Children in *Jesus Christ. Rom. viii. 15.* Nay, and who loved us at so stupendous a Rate, as to send His only begotten Son into the World to die for us. *John iii. 16.* And to say no more, to be separated from God is not only to be separated from that Glorious and Transcendent Majesty, which the highest Angels in Heaven cannot behold without Extasy and Rapture, but also to be separated from that *Fullness of Joy*, which always accompanies the *Presence of God*, and from those inconceivable *Pleasures which are at God's right Hand for ever more.* *Psal. xvi. 11.*

And now, Sinner, stop a little while and consider, how thou wilt be able to bear the Loss of this great Happiness; and what a confounding Sight it will be to thee at the last Day, to take a View of those Glories, which you now despise; such as *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive*, *1 Cor. ii. 9.* And what unspeakable Horrour and Indignation shall then fill thy Soul, when thou shalt thus stand before thy angry Lord and offended Judge? For if *at His Reproof the very Pillars of Heaven tremble and are astonished*, *Job xxvi. 11.* what Agonies and Convulsions must thou needs be thrown into, when thou shalt be thus scorned and rebuked by  
Him,

Him, and bid for ever to depart from His glorious Presence. And that which will in the highest Degree embitter and aggravate the Grief and Sorrow of this Separation, will be the Sense and Consideration of the Peculiar Character and Condition of That Person, by whom this Sentence shall be pronounced. He is not only the Sovereign Lord and Governour of the Universe, whose Mercy and Goodness is infinite, but He is the Man *Christ Jesus* also, the Blessed and Compassionate Saviour of Mankind, who took our Nature upon Him for this very Reason, that He might shed His most precious Blood for the Redemption of the World. And to this Purpose the Words of a learned Divine of our Church are very excellent and admirable.

“ What a terrible Thing (*says he*) will it be, to be  
 “ condemned by the Saviour of the World? What  
 “ Tumults and Convulsions of Thoughts must such  
 “ Sinners labour under? They must be Self-condem-  
 “ ned; they must feel all the Agonies of Guilt and  
 “ Despair. For if they could reasonably excuse them-  
 “ selves, or the most merciful Man in the World  
 “ could excuse them, their Judge would excuse them  
 “ too. I know not how to bear the Thoughts of this,  
 “ the very Imagination of it amazes and confounds  
 “ me! To be damned is a tolerable Punishment in  
 “ Comparison of being damned by the Saviour of the  
 “ World. And might I have been saved, will such a  
 “ Sinner say? Did my Saviour who is now my Judge,  
 “ a terrible Judge, shed His Blood for me? Did He  
 “ purchase Heaven for me? And does He now  
 “ condemn me to Hell, and deservedly too, against  
 “ His own Inclination, tho’ He loses the Purchase of  
 “ His Blood by it? O Wretch that I am! Might I  
 “ have been saved? And must I be damned? And  
 “ damned by the Saviour of the World! What Fury  
 “ and Passion will accompany these Thoughts, is not

“ to be expressed in Words; and I pray God none of  
 “ us may ever feel it. (a)” But,

*Secondly*, Another Part of the Misery of wicked Men in the next World will consist in this, That they shall be tormented with all that Uneasiness and Vexation of Mind, which will arise from the Sense of a guilty Conscience, and from those many raging Lusts and Passions which they shall carry with them into the other World. And this is what our Blessed Saviour calls *The Worm that never dieth*, Mark ix. 44. And how great a Torment that is, every one of us may in some Measure judge by our own Experience: there being few or none, who have not been so unhappy as to be subject to the Reproaches and Stings of a Guilty Conscience, and the Just Dread and Apprehension of God's Wrath and Displeasure upon that Account. The Holy Scriptures set forth this Uneasiness to us under very lively Characters and Descriptions. Thus, says the Prophet, *The Wicked are like the troubled Sea when it cannot rest. — And there is no Peace, saith my God, to the Wicked*, Isa. lvii. 20, 21. And the Psalmist representing the Wretchedness of his own Condition, speaks of it in Words very Emphatical: *Thine Arrows*, says he, *sick fast in me, and Thy Hand presseth me sore; there is no Health in my Flesh because of Thy Displeasure, neither is there any Rest in my Bones by Reason of my Sin. For my Wickednesses are gone over my Head, and are like a sore Burthen too heavy for me to bear*. Psal. xxxviii. 2, 3, 4. And the same Judgment of the great Evil and Misery of a Guilty Conscience, we find often made by the best *Heathen Writers* (b). And that Men might be made the  
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(a) Dean Sherlock on a Future Judgment. p. 223, 224.

(b) Exemplo quodcunque malo committitur, ipsi  
 Displicet auctori. *Juvenal*, Sat. 13.

Pœna autem vehemens, ac multo savior illis

Quas & Ceditius gravis invenit & Rhadamanthus.

Nocte dieque suum gestare in Pectore Testem. *Id. ib.*



more sensible of the unspeakable Anguish and Torments of a Guilty Conscience, it hath pleased God to give us in all Ages of the World several remarkable Instances of such Persons, who laboured under the greatest Agonies, and were subject to the utmost Terrors of Mind upon this Occasion. And because this is a Matter which the Generality of Mankind seldom care to think of, and too many are apt to treat with Scorn and Ridicule, it may not be amiss to mention some of them. Thus when *Cain* had contracted the horrid Guilt of Murder in shedding his Brother *Abel's* Blood, he immediately grew weary of his Life, and was afraid that every one that should find him would kill him. *Gen. iv. 13, 14.* And when *Saul* was admonished by *Samuel* of his Disobedience to God, and of God's Rejecting him from the Government upon that Account, we find in the Sequel of his History, That he could never afterwards enjoy any true Peace and Comfort, but lived in continual Uneasiness and Disquietude of Mind; and no sooner had the Spirit of the Lord departed from him, but an Evil Spirit from the Lord troubled him, *1 Sam. xvi. 14.* And when *Belshazzar* King of *Babylon* was put in Mind of his profane and wicked Life by the Hand-writing upon the Wall, the Scripture tells us, *That his Countenance changed, and his Thoughts troubled him; so that the Joints of his Loins were loosed, and his Knees smote one against the other, Dan. v. 6.* And to say no more, when *Judas* the Traytor had betrayed his Lord and Master to Death, he was seized at once with such an inconceivable Remorse and Horrour of Spirit, that he could not support himself under the Burthen of Life, but in order to make himself easy as he

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thought,

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Ὁ γὰρ το ἡδὲ μετὰ τῷ αἵματι ἐλόμενος, εἰ καὶ πρὸς ἑλπίον  
 δελεαθεῖν τῷ ἡδόντι, διὰ γὰρ τὸ αἷμα ἐκ μεταμέλει ἐπαίδυνεν  
 ἑρχέται. *Hierocles in Pythag. Aur. Carm. p. 178.*

thought, became his own Executioner, and laid violent Hands upon himself, *Matt. xxvii. 3, &c.*

These Instances are sufficient to convince us of the unspeakable Misery and Torment of a Guilty Conscience, when the Terrours of it are display'd in their full Strength and Force upon the Mind. And Prophane History hath furnished us with many Examples to the same Purpose, in the Persons of *Tiberius Cæsar*, *Caligula*, *Nero* (c), and others, who, as the *Pagan* Writers commonly express themselves, were lashed by the Furies (but as *Cicero* very justly explains it (d), by their own Evil Consciences) to that Degree, that as an excellent Prelate very well describes it: " They were like  
 " Men distracted, not knowing what to do, or whither to turn themselves for Ease, fearful of Thunder and Lightning, as if they had been the Bellows and Flashes of Hell itself; seeming to themselves  
 " to be haunted perpetually by the Ghosts of those whom they had injured (e); nay sometimes tormented even to real Distraction; committing the most horrid Outrages upon themselves, tearing out their  
 " Eyes, and making frequent Attempts upon themselves

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(c) Vid. *Suet. in Vit. Tiber. cap. 66* in *Vit. Calig. cap. 51.* in *Vit. Ner. cap. 34.*

(d) *Eos agitant insectanturque Furia, non ardentibus tædis, sicut in fabulis, sed angore conscientia, fraudisque cruciatu. Cic. de Legibus, lib. 1.*

(e) Of what the good Archbishop here mentions, *Theodorick* King of the *Goths* in *Italy*, is a very remarkable Instance, who, tho' otherwise a wise and just Prince, having put that excellent Senator *Symmachus* unjustly to Death, was so troubled at the Fact, that he imagined himself to be perpetually haunted by his Ghost; insomuch that the Head of a large Fish being served up to Table at Supper, he fancied it to be that of *Symmachus* upbraiding him for his Cruelty; which so wrought upon his Imagination, that he was seized immediately with such Horror and Amazement, which threw him into a violent Fever, of which he died in a few Days. Vid. the Continuation of *Ecbard's Roman History. vol. II. p. 50.* See also *Josephus de Bell. Jud. lib. vii. cap. ult.* where there is a remarkable Instance of the same Nature.

“ selves, always weary of Life, and yet when they  
 “ were capable of any Reflection, fearful to the ut-  
 “ most of Death (f)”. And modern History hath given  
 us an extraordinary Example of this Matter in the Case  
 of *Francis Spira*, who by Reason of his Guilt in apo-  
 statizing from the Purity of the Reformed Religion,  
 fell into such an Intolerable Agony and Desperation  
 of Mind, That as some Eminent Divines have truly  
 observed (g), it was a Kind of Hell upon Earth to  
 him. But one of the most remarkable Instances to this  
 Purpose, which any History can furnish us with, is that  
 of a Noble Lord of our own Nation, than whom, as  
 no one scarce ever lived a more profane and dissolute  
 Life, so no one perhaps ever died a greater Penitent.  
 And some Time before his Death he declared (and I hear-  
 tily wish that his Words might sink deep into all our  
 Hearts), “ That his Sorrow for his Sins was a most  
 “ penetrating and cutting Sorrow, and that tho’ in his  
 “ Body he suffered extreme Pains for some Weeks,  
 “ yet the Agonies of his Mind sometimes swallowed  
 “ up the Sense of what he felt in his Body : And that  
 “ tho’ there were nothing to come after this Life, yet  
 “ all the Pleasures he had ever known in Sin (and I  
 “ believe there have been but few, if any, who have  
 “ known more of them than he did) were not worth  
 “ that Torture which he felt in his Mind”(b). And  
 there is no Doubt, but that the greatest Part of Sinners  
 are oftentimes made sensible of the Misery and Tor-  
 ment of a guilty Conscience by their sad Experience.  
 But the true Reason why they perceive so little of it at  
 present, is because they are almost perpetually engaged  
 in the Affairs and Business of this Life, and given up  
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(f) See Archbishop *Dawes*’s Sermon on a wounded Spirit, p. 14.

(g) See *Tillotson*, vol. II. p. 489. See also *Christian Life*,  
 vol. V. p. 38, 39.

(b) Bishop *Burnet*’s Life of the Earl of *Rochester*, p. 98.

to the Enjoyments and Pleasures of it; and by that Means have little or no Time for serious Thoughts and Considerations, till they are awakened by some extraordinary Calamity and Affliction, or lie upon a sick and dying Bed, under the Terrour and Apprehension of Judgment and Eternity; and then the great Distraction and Torment of their Minds any one may easily discover.

And now, if the Consciousness of Guilt be so pungent and afflictive in this present Life, where there are innumerable Arts and Means to divert the Sense of it, and where the worst of Sinners may entertain some Hopes that by the Grace of God they may be brought to Repentance, and by that Means restored to His Favour; Good God! what an inexpressible Remorse and Anguish must lie upon the Spirits of the Wicked in the other World, when they shall be for ever banished from God's Presence, and cast into the Regions of Horror and Darkness; when all sensible Delights and Pleasures shall be withdrawn, and they shall have Nothing to divert their Thoughts for one Moment; but the full Rage and Fury of their Conscience shall be turned against them. Oh! It will then be a dreadful Consideration to them to reflect upon the Reasonableness and Excellency of those Laws which they have broken; That supreme Authority which they have violated; the easiness and Delightfulness of those Precepts they have transgressed, and the many Opportunities of Grace and Salvation which they have slighted; and thereby, that tho' they were made to live for ever, yet all Possibility of being happy for one Minute is for ever at an End. But above all, it will confound and distract them to the utmost, to think of the Happiness of Heaven which they have despised, and to take a View of the Glories of that Kingdom which they have lost for ever. And this especially, when they consider the foolish and wretched Exchange which they have made, and that they have *sold themselves for nought*,



as the Prophet speaks, *Iſa. lii. 3. i. e.* That they were not drawn into this fatal Choice by any Thing of great Moment and Importance, but for a few perishing Pleasures only and imaginary Satisfactions (not worth the Care and Concern of one single Hour) they have forfeited the Love and Favour of God, and made themselves for ever miserable.

But yet, besides the Trouble and Anguish of their guilty Conscience, the Wicked shall be exceedingly afflicted and distracted with all those raging Lusts and Passions which they shall carry with them into the other World; such as Envy and Pride, Malice and Hatred, Revenge and the like, all which shall have continual Matter and Occasion to exercise them in that Place of Torment. For did the envious Man here repine at the Happiness and Prosperity of others? He will there surely fret and vex himself infinitely more at the Thoughts of the Happiness of the Saints in Light. Was the proud Man uneasy and inflamed at every Slight and Affront which was here cast upon him? He shall there meet with Nothing else than continual Reproach and Provocation. And did the angry Man here swell with Rage, and his Heart burn with Revenge at the small Offences and Injuries sustained by him? He shall be there perpetually exposed to the Outrages and Insults and most malicious Treatment of those he converses with. And so we may say of all the other Passions; they shall never want Matter to be exercised upon, and shall to the highest Degree be aggravated and inflamed, to the great Disquietude and Vexation of Evil Spirits. And if the Doctrine of the ancient Platonists be admitted, who thought that the Souls of impure and wicked Men, who were in this Life entirely devoted to the Pleasures of Sense, would, when they were departed from the Body, have the same earnest Longings and Desires after sensual Objects, as they had in this Life, we may well conceive this to be a very great Addition to the Uneasiness and Torment of such unhappy

unhappy Beings. For to have strong and ardent Desires after Things which they can never enjoy; to be continually sollicitated and importuned by sensual Appetites and Inclinations, without having any Faculties and Objects of Indulgence and Gratification, must needs render any Creature extremely miserable. And indeed this Notion of the Infelicity of impure and wicked Spirits hath not only been propagated by some of the best Philosophers (i), and enriched with great Strength of Imagination by the ancient Poets (k); but it hath also been countenanced and improved by some of our most Eminent Divines (l), with great Shew of Reason and Probability of Argument. But as the Scripture does not expressly mention this among the Punishments of the Wicked in the next Life, I shall pass it by, and proceed to the

*Third Thing* in which the Misery of the Damned shall consist, and that is, that they shall be confined to that dismal and loathsome Place, which the Scripture calls by the Name of *Hell*, and to the dreadful and horrid Company of the Devil and his Angels. As to the Place itself, in which the Wicked shall be shut up, it is differently express'd in the Sacred Writings: Sometimes it is called the *Place of Torment*, as *Luke*, xvi. 28. Most frequently by the Name of *Hell*, which Name was taken from those bitter and grievous Cries and Lamentations which the Children of  
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(i) Ἡ δὲ (Ψυχὴ) ἐπιθυμητικῶς τὰ σώματα ἔχουσα, αὐτὴ ἐκείνῳ πολὺν χρόνον ἐπισημένῃ καὶ αὐτὴ ὄρατον τόπον πολλὰ ἀντιτείνουσα, καὶ πολλὰ παθούσα, βία καὶ μόλις ὑπὸ τῆς πρὸς ἐλπίαν δαίμονος ὀύχεται ἀγόμενη. *Plato in Phaed.*

(k) ————— *Lucent genialibus altis  
Aurea fulcra toris, epulaeque ante ora paratae,  
Regifico Luxu, Furiarum maxima juxta  
Accubat, & manibus prohibet contingere mensas,  
Exurgitque facem attollens, atque intonat ore.* *Virgil Aeneid. lib. VI.*

(l) See particularly *Dr Scot's Christian Life*, vol. I. chap. 3.  
§ IV. vol. V. p. 44. *Ec.* *Dr Sherlock on Death*, chap. i. §. II.

the *Israelites* sent forth, when they were sacrificed, in an Image of Brass, to *Moloch*, in the Valley of *Hinnon*, of which we read in many Places of Holy Scripture, *Lev.* xviii. 21. *2 Kings*, xxiii. 10. *Jer.* vii. 31. At other Times it is described by the Name of *Darkness*, *2 Pet.* ii. 4. And by St *Jude* called the *Blackness of Darkness*, v. 13. Not that we are to suppose, that those Infernal Regions shall be so absolutely dark, that there shall not be the least Degree of Light therein, which may be necessary to give them a Sight of those rueful and dismal Spectacles, which they shall there behold. And that which adds very much to the Misery of the Wicked in that State of Darkness, is the vile and accursed Company which they shall there keep, viz. that of the Devil and his Angels; being of the most prepense Spirit and Malice, who as they first seduced them by their Temptations into this Place of Torments, so they will now be their very Tormentors; and whose chief Satisfaction it will be (if any Thing can possibly administer Satisfaction to such unhappy Beings) to make them as miserable as they are able. And surely then it must be a very awakening Scene of Misery to be shut up in this dark and loathsome Dungeon, and there confined to the Company of such malicious and accursed Beings; to see so many doleful and wretched Objects, and to hear the continual Sighs and Groans and bitter Lamentations of their Fellow Creatures, roaring under the Sense of Guilt, and the exquisite Pains and Torments of Hell-Fire, which is the

*Fourth* Particular, wherein the Punishment of the Damned shall consist. This the great Judge of the World frequently forewarns us of, and in the Sentence, which shall be pronounced upon the Wicked, He makes express Mention of it; *Go ye Cursed into Everlasting Fire, Matt.* xxv. 41. And the same is also so frequently asserted in other Places of Scripture, that it will be needless to spend any Time in the Proof of it.

There are, I know, many Enquiries raised upon this Head, the Consideration of which tends more to the gratifying the Curiosity, than it does to the Edification of Mankind ; and therefore I shall say but little of them : as, *viz.* Whether the Fire of Hell be a real and material Fire, or only Figurative and Metaphorical ? and if it be a Real Fire, how it can affect the Devil and his Angels, which are generally supposed to be purely spiritual and immaterial Beings (*m*) ? And how the Bodies of the Damned can be able to subsist for ever under the Pains of it ? In answer to which Questions it will be sufficient to observe, that unless we had a more perfect Knowledge of the Nature of Spirits, we cannot be able to determine with Certainty how far a material Fire may affect them. We find by Experience, that the Souls of Men are in this World oftentimes affected, and that to a great Degree, by material and sensible Impressions ; and therefore, to use the Words of St. *Austin*, (*n*) ‘ Why may we not affirm, that incorporeal Spirits may be, tho’ in a wonderful Manner, yet actually tormented by corporeal Fire, when it is plain, that the Souls of Men are now included in bodily Members, and shall hereafter be perpetually

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(*m*) The Possibility of this is confidently denied by Mr. *Hobbes* in his *Leviathan*, chap. xxxiv. p. 213. and herein he is seconded by our most learned Dr. *Cudworth*, *Intellect. System*, p. 817. who thinks, that the Notion of Spirits, not united to Bodies, being tormented with Fire, is, as much as lieth in us, the exposing Christianity and the Scriptures to the Scorn and Contempt of all Philosophers. But with all Submission to the Judgment of so very great and worthy a Person, that Spirits merely immaterial may not be capable of receiving Impressions from material Fire, is more than he or any Man can prove.

(*n*) Cur enim non dicamus quamvis miris tamen veris modis etiam spiritus incorporeos posse pœnâ corporalis ignis affligi, si spiritus hominum etiam ipsi profecto incorporei, & nunc poterunt includi corporalibus membris, & tunc poterunt corporum suorum vinculis insolubiliter alligari ? *Aug. de civitat. Dei*, lib. 21. cap. 10. See also Dr. *Templer*’s Answer to *Hobbes*’s *Leviathan*, who follows St. *Augustine* in this Notion, and has somewhat improved it, cap. 21. p. 138.



‘petually bound and chained to them.’ And if God designs that wicked Men shall for ever suffer the Pains of Hell-fire, He can easily order and dispose their Bodies in such a firm and indissoluble Texture, as to render them capable of enduring it. I am aware indeed, that many of those, who deny that the Fire of Hell is Real and Material, do it for this Reason, because they imagine, that the Punishment of the Damned, which is called in Scripture by the Name of Hell-fire, consists entirely in the Fire of Conscience, as they call it, *i. e.* in the raging Torments and Reflections of their guilty Minds. But now this is certainly a great Mistake, as is evident from these two Considerations, 1<sup>st</sup>. Because the Bodies (o) of the Wicked shall suffer the Torments of Hell-fire, as well as their Souls. This the Holy Scriptures frequently assures us of; and our Blessed Saviour useth this as a powerful Argument to persuade us to fear God more than Men, *viz.* because *He can destroy both Soul and Body in Hell*, Matth. x. 28. Now the Bodies of the Wicked are not capable of the Punishment of Reflection, which can have Relation only to their Souls or Spirits. And therefore it is plain, that the Fire of Hell doth not consist altogether in the Fire of Conscience, because it is prepar’d for the Punishment of the Body as well as the Soul. And 2<sup>dly</sup>. because our Lord, when speaking of the Torments of Hell, plainly distinguishes between the Fire of Conscience and the Eternal Pains of Hell-fire. Thus, says he, *Mark ix. 44. where their Worm dieth not, and the Fire is not quenched.* The former regards entirely the Punishment of their Minds, the latter the Punishment of their Bodies. But this not absolutely so, but that the Spirits of the Wicked will also be exceedingly affected thereby, as was

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(o) At vero *Gebenna* illa, quod etiam flagrum ignis & sulphuris dictum est, corporeus ignis erit, & cruciabit corpora damnatorum, *August.* *ibid.*

before observ'd. And as a very learned Divine justly remark'd (p), 'To allegorize this Fire into nothing but Remorse of Conscience, would endanger the rendering of other Points of our Religion uncertain.' And this is so very clear a Point, that not only the most learned Divines of the Christian Church in all Ages, but the ancient Jewish *Targums* themselves represent the *Gebenna*, or Hell which is prepared for the Wicked in the World to come, as a Furnace sparkling and flaming with Fire, in which they shall be burned (q).

And indeed all the Descriptions, which are given to us of Hell-fire in the Holy Scripture, plainly shew, that besides the Reflections of their guilty Minds, there is some external Punishment prepared for the Bodies of the Wicked, expressed by the Name of Fire and Brimstone. And it will be no Relief at all to the Damned, if we should suppose (which is yet more than any one can prove) that this Expression is not to be strictly and literally understood; since it is very plain, that there is some outward sensible Punishment signified by it, which in the Judgment of some of our greatest Divines, will be more sharp and tormenting than real Fire and Brimstone itself (r). And a late Author, who hath wrote upon this Subject, tho' he denies the Fire of Hell to be material, yet expressly allows, that it will be equally pungent and afflictive to the Damned, as if it were material (s). And if so, it must be so great and dreadful a Misery, as I am sure no Tongue can possibly describe, nor any Imagination conceive. Especially, if we add to this the fifth and last Consideration, which

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(p) *Cudworth*, ibid.

(q) See the Passage quoted by Dr. *Whitby* on *Mark* ix. 43, 44.

(r) See particularly *Sherlock* on Death, chap. i. § 3.

(s) *Political History of the Devil*, p. 211, 212.

is worse and more terrible than all that hath been already mentioned; and that is, that the Wicked shall be subject to all these dreadful Miseries and Punishments, not for a few Years only, or for Ages, but for ever. And this is so very frequently expressed in Holy Scripture, that it might seem needless to take any Notice of it. However, that you may be the more mindful of this great Truth, it may not be amiss to recite a few Texts, in which it is plainly declared and represented to us. Thus our Blessed Saviour, when speaking of the Punishment of Hell, calls it by the Name of *Eternal Damnation*, Mark iii. 29. And again, in the same Evangelist, he tells us, that it is a *Worm that never dieth, and a Fire that is not quenched*, Mark ix. 43, &c. St. Paul styles it *Everlasting Judgment*, Heb. vi. 2. and again, *Everlasting Destruction*, 2 Thess. i. 9. And St. Jude describes it by *Blackness of Darknes for ever*, v. 13. And St. John, when relating the Miseries of the Damned, says, *They have no Rest Night nor Day, but the Smoke of their Torment ascendeth up for ever and ever*, Rev. xiv. 11. And to say no more, our Lord assures us, in the Words of the Text, *That the Wicked shall go away into Everlasting Punishment*. And that the Term *Everlasting* is here to be understood in the strictest Sense; St. Augustine and others have frequently inferred from hence, that in the same Verse, the very same Word is used in the Original, concerning the future Happiness of the Righteous. And therefore, since there is no Doubt but the Word *Eternal*, when spoken of the Happiness of Righteous Men, is to be understood in the strictest Sense, for a Duration which shall never come to an End, there is no Reason why the same Expression in the same Verse, should not be taken in the like Sense, when ascribed to the Punishment of the Wicked. And indeed the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment hath not only been the constant Doctrine of all true and Catholick Christians, and expressly asserted and

and maintained by the *Jews* of old (*1*), but it hath also been thought highly just and reasonable by the most eminent Writers in the Heathen World (*2*).

And now, my Brethren, if wicked Men in the next Life are to be miserable in all those Respects which are above-mentioned, and if they are to endure all these great and exquisite Sufferings to all Eternity, it will, I think, be impossible for us to imagine any thing more, which might be added to increase and augment their Torment and Misery. And so far will I be from attempting to describe what Eternal Punishment is, that I much question whether any finite, created Being can have a perfect and adequate Notion and Conception of it.

*Eternal Misery*——! The very Sound of the Word is dreadful and terrible: What then must it be for any wretched Creature to suffer and endure it? I shall therefore be so far from presuming to describe it, that I rather chuse to pray earnestly to God, that, for Christ's sake, none of us here present may ever know what it means.

I am sensible there have been many Objections rais'd by the Adversaries of our Faith against the Doctrine of future Punishment, and chiefly against the Eternity of its Duration, and particularly that Eternal Punishment bears no Proportion to the Sins of a short and momentary Life; and therefore it must be unjust and unreasonable.

And, *2dly*. That Eternal Punishment is inconsistent with the Mercy and Goodness of God. These Objections have been fully answered by many of our learned Divines, from whom any one may receive compleat Satisf-

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(*1*) Vid. *Whitby*, *ibid.* and on *Heb.* vi. 2. in which Places there are several very remarkable Passages cited out of Jewish and Christian Authors to this purpose.

(*2*) See the Preface to these Discourses, p. 13.



Satisfaction in this Matter (\*). I have not Time at present, neither do I think it necessary, to give them a full and distinct Consideration ; since it will be no difficult Thing, in a few Words, to suggest some Observations, that will entirely destroy the Force and Strength of them. And,

1<sup>st</sup>. It is a great Mistake to think, that the Justice of Punishment consists in an exact Proportion between the Crime and the Punishment, as the Objection supposes: For, not to mention many Considerations which may be drawn from the Authority and Condition of the Lawgiver, &c. it is very plain, that the Justice of Punishment consists in such a Measure of it, as is necessary to secure Obedience to the Laws. Whatever Degree of Punishment is necessary to secure this Obedience, is just and reasonable; and whatever is required that is beyond this, may be allowed to be unjust and severe. We see this made very clear and evident in our judicial Proceedings here upon Earth. If we should judge of the Equity of Punishment by the strict Rule of Proportion, there could be no other capital Crime, but that of Murder: Since, by that Rule, nothing but the shedding of Man's Blood could demand that the Blood of Man should be shed for it. And yet we know very well, that Felony and Burglary, and many other Crimes, are punished with Death; and this many times, when the Matter of the Crime is but of small Consequence. And yet we see, that all wise Men are fully satisfied of the Equity of the Sentence, because it is evident in Experience, that no Punishment that is short of this would  
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(\*) See particularly Dr. *Nicholl's* Conference, Part III. p. 304. &c. Dr. *Scott's* Christian Life, vol. V. p. 91. Bp. *Burnet's* 39 Articles, p. 29, 30. Dr. *Sam. Clarke's* Sermons at *Boyle's* Lectures, Part II. Prop. 13. § 14. Dr. *Moss's* Sermons, vol. I. Sermon 14 & 15. Abp. *Dawes's* 4th and 6th Sermons on Hell Torments; in which Places there are many solid and judicious Observations upon this Head.

be effectual to preserve Men from such Crimes, and to secure the Rights and Properties of Mankind, and establish the Peace of Human Society : Nay, and even this itself in many Persons proves insufficient. And the Case is the very same as to the Doctrine of Eternal Punishment. If that be necessary to enforce Obedience to God's Laws, it cannot be unjust in God to inflict it upon those who transgress them. And that Eternal Punishment is necessary to this End, one may easily judge from hence, that nothing less than this would keep the World in any tolerable Order and Government : For even now, when Men are educated in the Persuasion of this Truth, we see what little Effect and Influence it hath upon their Lives and Manners ; and that notwithstanding this Belief, the Generality of Christians themselves abound in all Manner of Impiety and Wickedness. What then would be the Consequence, and what a Deluge of Profaneness and Debauchery would overspread the World, if this powerful Restraint upon the Minds of Men were taken away, any one of us may easily judge.

But 2<sup>dly</sup>. As to the Objection against eternal Punishment, drawn from the Goodness of God, it might be sufficient to say, that unless we had a more perfect Knowledge of God's Perfections than we can possibly have in this Life, we cannot in many Cases absolutely pronounce what is inconsistent with them. And I think it will become us in Modesty to conclude, that since God (who must certainly best understand His own Nature and Perfections) hath plainly threatened Eternal Punishment, that therefore Eternal Punishment is not inconsistent with those Perfections. But besides this, the Objection is founded on a very false Notion of God's Goodness ; for it is here supposed to be of the very same Nature, as that Perfection of Man, which is called *Tenderness* and *Compassion*, which is apt to be sensibly touched and grieved at the Sight of great Sufferings, and to melt at a vast Degree of Misery. But the Goodness

Goodness of God is not of this kind. It has nothing of Passion in its Nature, tho' it is often represented as such to us in Holy Scripture, the better to accommodate it to our Capacities. The true Notion of God's Goodness, so far as it concerns our present Argument, consists in this, *viz.* That He be ready at all times to pardon the greatest Sinners upon their sincere Repentance, and that He be patient and long-suffering towards them, so long as they are capable of becoming good. Whilst this Capacity of becoming good remains in them, they are proper Objects of His Goodness. But whenever they are incapable of becoming good, they are beyond the Reach of it. For to suppose that the Goodness of God should extend to Creatures not capable of becoming good, would be to destroy his Holiness and Purity, which are as essential to God as His Goodness. And it is no more a Limitation of the Divine Goodness to say, that some Men, and some States are beyond it, than it is a Limitation of His Power to say, that He cannot sin, or work Impossibilities and Contradictions, as a very learned Prelate justly observes (y). And therefore to imagine, that the Goodness of God is of such a Nature, as that it is to be overcome by Importunities and Howlings, and other Submissions of wicked Men in a State of Misery, is, as the same Author justly remarks (z), 'A Capital and Fundamental Error in Religion.'

And not to mention that our Blessed Saviour hath plainly declared, *that the Wicked shall be for ever miserable* (and surely it will be a very unworthy Thought of Him to conceive, that He came into the World to delude and terrify Men with vain Fears and Apprehensions, which have no just Ground and Foundation :) I say, not to mention this, we very plainly see by the

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(y) Burnet on the 39 Articles, p. 29.

(z) Burnet, p. 30.

Administration of Providence in this World, that it is consistent with God's Goodness to send down very heavy and severe Judgments upon Sinners, as is evident from innumerable Instances recorded in Scripture, and particularly, That of the general Deluge, the Burning of *Sodom* and *Gomorrab* with Fire and Brimstone, the Extirpation of the *Canaanites*, and the Destruction of *Jerusalem*. Nay, and that even many of the best of God's Servants have been severely persecuted, and for many Years together exposed to the sharpest Pains and most bitter Sufferings: And further, that even Christ Himself, the Son of God's Love, was for the Sins of Mankind cruelly put to Death, and made subject to such Sorrow, that, as the Prophet truly observes, *there was none ever like it*, Lam. i. 12. If then it be consistent with God's Goodness to punish Sinners in this Life so very severely, nay, and oftentimes to exercise the Righteous with the heaviest Afflictions, we may well conclude, that the Punishment of those, who are finally wicked and incorrigible in the next World, when the Day of God's Grace and Patience shall be at-End, will be very dreadful and intolerable.

And it will be no Relief to Men under this Apprehension, that, as a noble Author hath rightly observed, 'there is no such thing as Passion, properly speaking, in God; and therefore, that we have no Reason to be afraid of him, since He is not endued with any Malice<sup>(aa)</sup>.' For tho' this be very true, (and the Enemies of Religion may make the utmost Advantage of it that they can) yet this depends entirely on the Supposition of our conforming ourselves to the Divine Perfections, and living in the Practice of Religion and Virtue, which I presume the learned Writer there took for granted, tho' it be not directly exprest; and that he



he designed this Observation, only as a Guard against the Evil of Superstition. Since, if we wilfully indulge ourselves in Sin and Wickedness, the necessary Holiness and Justice of God will be a sufficient Ground for our Fears of his Wrath and Vengeance; otherwise, not only the natural Notions of our own Minds, and the Sense and Judgment of Mankind in all Ages, have deceived us, but the Scriptures have given us a wrong Account of God's Attributes and Perfections from one End to the other. For there we may clearly perceive, that in the same Holy Book in which it is said, *That the Goodness and Mercy of God is infinite*, it is also solemnly declared, *That he is a Jealous God, and a consuming Fire*, Exod. xxxiv. 14. Heb. xii. 29. And our Blessed Saviour, who hath shed his most precious Blood for our Redemption, hath plainly told us, *That except we repent we shall surely perish*, Luke xiii. 3, 5. And therefore, tho' it is unquestionable, that when the Holy Scripture speaks of *God's Wrath and Fury, and Burning of Anger, &c.* the Words are not to be strictly and literally understood, yet the Effect of Punishment is to all impenitent and incorrigible Sinners as certain and inevitable as if such Passions were really and literally inherent in the Deity (bb). And of this our noble Author was so very sensible, that he freely acknowledges, 'That whenever there is an Apprehension of what is wrong, odious, morally deformed, and ill-deserving, there Conscience must have Effect, and Punishment of necessity be apprehended, tho' it be not expressly threatened (cc)'. And surely then, all impenitent Sinners under the Gospel

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(bb) When Anger or any other Passion is ascribed to God in Scripture, it is a very good Rule which Schoolmen give for the explaining such Expressions, viz. *Affectus in Deo denotant Effectus*. Passions in God denote that the Effect is answerable to the highest Emotion of Passion which we can conceive. *Louth's Comment. in Is. xxx. 27.*

(cc) Characteristicks. vol. II, p. 129.

pel have more especial Reason to be afraid thereof, when it is so plainly threatened in the Holy Scriptures, of whose Divine Inspiration and Authority we have the most abundant Evidence and Demonstration.

And thus I have discours'd fully concerning the Doctrine of Future Punishment. Nothing now remains, but that, in a very few Words, I proceed to shew what Effect and Influence the Consideration of this Matter ought to have upon us.

And now, my Brethren, if wicked Men are to suffer all those dreadful and inconceivable Miseries which I have display'd, and that for ever, may I not justly say to every one of you, upon this Occasion, as the Angel of the Lord did to *Lot*, when he brought him out of *Sodom*, *Escape for thy Life, look not behind thee, neither stay thou in all the Plain, lest thou be consumed?* For is Eternal Punishment prepared for Sinners in another World? we cannot possibly make too much Haste to escape and avoid it. Neither can we reconcile it with the lowest Degree of Wisdom and Prudence, to suffer one Day to pass over our Heads, till by a sincere Repentance and Resolution of a good Life, we have endeavour'd to get beyond the Reach and Danger of it. The Pleasures of Sin are in themselves deceitful and vain, and do all of them tend to make us unhappy and miserable in this Life: But were the Case quite otherwise, could the Pleasures of Sin be enjoyed with the utmost Safety to our Bodies, and Quiet of our Minds, and could they be united together in their full Extent, yet I am sure, if we knew, and would consider what the Pains of Hell are, we would not willingly endure them for one single Hour, on condition that we might be surrounded with all the Honours, Riches and Pleasures of this World for ten thousand Years. What then shall we think of ourselves, if, for the sake of a few trifling Pleasures and imaginary Satisfaction, which are at present injurious and detrimental to ourselves, and which we loath and nauseate almost

most as soon as we enjoy them, we shall make ourselves for ever miserable? Let me then, blessed Christians, persuade you once for all, to take this Matter into your most serious Consideration. Remember, when any of you lay languishing upon a Bed of Sickness, or were exposed to sharp Pains and Sufferings of the Body, how hard and grievous you thought your Condition to be? And yet, what are the greatest Pains and Afflictions of Body to the Torments and Perpeffions of Hell, or the Sufferings of this short Life, to those of Eternity? Do not then deceive yourselves in this Matter, nor put off your Repentance from Day to Day; nor depend upon any false Notions of God's Mercy, as if it was inconsistent with his Perfections to inflict the Pains of Hell and Damnation upon you; for God hath expressly declared the contrary, That he will make all impenitent Sinners in the next Life eternally miserable; *and there is no one who can deliver out of his Hands*, Job x. 7. If therefore, Sinner, you are resolved to bring your self into this dreadful Condition, you must support yourself under it as well as you can; for God will be so far from shewing you any Pity, that on the contrary *He will rather laugh at your Calamity, and mock when your Fear cometh*, Prov. i. 26.

# SERMON III.

## Concerning the Future Happiness of the Righteous.

**Matthew xxv.**

**The latter Part of the 46th Verse.**

*But the Righteous into Life Eternal.*

**A**MONG all the Arguments and Motives to a Religious Life, which are propounded to us in the Holy Scripture, there are none so strong and powerful, as those which are drawn from the Everlasting Happiness and Misery of the Life to come; since nothing can so effectually excite the Hopes and Fears of Men (which are the main Springs of all their Actions) as a due and serious Attention to this great Article of our Faith. And indeed, That Man must be utterly stupid and infatuated, who will acknowledge only the Improbability of this important Doctrine, and yet shall not be prevailed upon thereby to an immediate forsaking of his Sins, and to a Life of universal Holiness  
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and Virtue. In my last Discourse, I treated at large concerning the Doctrine of future Punishment, and shewed you wherein consists the Misery of the Wicked in the Life to come, and what a mighty Persuasive the Belief of this Doctrine carries in it to a speedy Repentance. I shall now discourse of the other great Sanction of the Gospel, *viz. That of the Everlasting Happiness of Righteous and Good Men in the Kingdom of Heaven.* A ravishing and delightful Subject indeed! The most distant Hopes and probable Expectation of which Happiness is sufficient to support us under the Troubles of this Life, and to animate us with due Vigour and Resolution in the Practice of Virtue. And much more then surely should we be thoroughly persuaded and influenced thereby, when we have the clearest and strongest Proofs and Evidences of the Truth of it. In speaking then to this delightful Subject, I shall first enquire, wherein consists the Happiness which is reserved for the Righteous in the Kingdom of Heaven. And, *2dly.* what Effect and Influence the Belief and Expectation of this great Happiness ought to have upon us. And,

*First,* Wherein consists the Happiness, which God hath prepared for Righteous and Good Men in the Kingdom of Heaven? But before I proceed to this, I desire not to be misunderstood, as if I would pretend in any considerable Measure to describe the Nature and Perfection of this great Felicity. No, the Tongues of Men and Angels are not able fully to express it. When we have said all that we can of the Joys of Heaven, we shall not be able perhaps to discover the thousandth Part of them. And indeed, to speak properly, it is so far from derogating from the Happiness of the next Life, that it is in so great a Measure unknown to us, that this very Consideration does in the highest Degree augment and increase the Value thereof. For did we perfectly know what it is, and were it exactly like to any thing which we enjoy in this World, we might then be sure that it could not be very great: since what  
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the Wise Man hath observed of all the Pleasures of this Life is certainly true (as we shall all find sooner or later by Experience) *Vanity of Vanities, all is Vanity*, Eccl. i. 2. And for this Reason, the most sublime Account of the Joys of Heaven, which can be expressed in Scripture-Language, is in those negative Words of St Paul, (which do primarily refer to the immediate Blessings and Advantages of the Gospel-State) *viz. Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man to conceive the Things which God hath prepared for them that love him*, 1 Cor. ii. 9. But tho' the Happiness of the next Life be in a great Measure unknown, and therefore in Truth the more excellent and desirable, yet since we are too apt to form our Judgment of Things from Sense and Experience, and are but little moved and excited by the Proposal of such Things, of which we have no competent Idea and Conception, it hath therefore pleased God to condescend so far to our Weakness, as to set forth the Nature of our Future Happiness, by Characters and Descriptions taken from such Things as are of the greatest Value and Esteem with us. Thus the Happiness of Heaven is described in Scripture by the Name of a *Crown*, 1 Cor. ix. 25. Sometimes it is called a *Kingdom*, Matth. xxv. 34. and an *Inheritance*, and That *incorruptible, and undefiled*, 1 Peter i. 4. At other times, it is said to be *Eternal Life*, Matth. xxv. 46. than which surely there is not any thing that can be more desirable. It is to *see God*, the Great Author and Fountain of all Happiness and Perfection, Matth. v. 8. To *live for ever in his glorious Presence*, Psal. xvi. 11. John xiv. 2, 3. To enjoy the blessed Conversation of *Jesus Christ* our dear Saviour and Redeemer, And to have the delightful Company of the Holy Angels, and *the Spirits of just Men made perfect*, Heb. xii. 22, &c. And to be *Kings and Priests to God for ever*, Rev. i. 6. And to say no more, it is to be in a State of absolute Ease and perfect Freedom, where there shall *be no more Sorrow, nor Crying, nor Pain*, Rev. xxi. 4: and where we shall  
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*die no more, but shall be equal to the Holy Angels, and shall be the Children of God, as being the Children of the Resurrection, Luke xx. 36.* This and infinitely more than we can now either express or conceive shall be the Portion of those blessed Souls, who shall be admitted into Heaven. And one would think, that the least Part of what is here proposed to us, should fill us with Transport, and be sufficient to excite us to that Duty which God requires. But because these Descriptions of our Future Happiness are given to us in too general Terms, and therefore do not so powerfully incline and command our Affections, as more explicate and circumstantial Representations might be supposed to do, I shall therefore enquire more largely and particularly into the Nature of this Happiness, and consider what are the chief and principal Things in which it consists.

Now without indulging ourselves in Fancy and Imagination; of which there is no End, I shall confine my Thoughts at present to those Particulars which are laid down in Holy Scripture, as the Ingredients and Qualifications of that Happiness which God hath prepared for them that love him; and they are chiefly and principally these four following. *1st.* That bright and glorious Place which Righteous and Good Men shall inhabit. *2dly.* The Blessed and Excellent Company which they shall there keep. *3dly.* The delightful and entertaining Employments in which they shall spend their Time. And *4thly* and *lastly*, The permanent and everlasting Duration of all their Happiness and Enjoyments.

And, *1st.* The Happiness of Righteous and Good Men in the Life to come shall consist in that bright and glorious Place in which they shall dwell; and this is expressed by different Names and Characters in Holy Scripture. Sometimes it is called *Paradise*, 2 Cor. xii. 4. Rev. ii. 7. Our Saviour terms it, *His Father's House*, John xiv. 2. It is most commonly called by the Name of *Heaven*, and by St Paul, *The Third Heaven*,

2 Cor. xii. 2. And tho' we do not know in what Part or Region of the Universe this happy and delightful Habitation is situated, yet we may well conclude that it must be exceedingly glorious, since it is the Place where the Great Majesty of Heaven resides, and where he hath placed his Throne, as the Psalmist speaks, *Psal. xi. 4.* And if a Sight of the Glories of this visible Creation be so pleasing and entertaining to us; if a bare Prospect of the ancient Palaces and magnificent Structures of this World is so apt to fill our Minds with Delight and Admiration, we may well conceive that we shall be surprized and transported beyond Measure, when we shall be received into the Palace of the great King of the Universe, a House not made with Hands, nor adorned with Human Art or Device, but built by God himself, and enriched with the Treasures of His Power and Wisdom. When *Abasbuerus* the King of *Persia* made a great Feast for his Princes and Nobles, he adorned the Court of his Palace in so splendid and glorious a Manner, that an inspired Writer hath thought it worth his while to give us a particular Description of it, *Ezra. i.* And this he did to shew *the Riches of his Kingdom, and the Honour of his Majesty, v. 4.* And yet should all this State and Grandeur, and that of King *Solomon* himself, and all the Princes of this World, nay, I might say, should the Glory of the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the Constellations in the Firmament be added thereunto, yet all this would be no more to be compared to the Glory of God's Kingdom, than the Light of a single Spark is to that of the Sun. But nevertheless, the Glory of the Kingdom of Heaven does not so much arise from the Grandeur and Magnificence of the Place itself, as from the visible Manifestation of God's Presence which shall be exhibited therein; and this is commonly called the *Beatifick Vision*, and is what is meant by that Expression of *seeing God*, so frequently mentioned in Holy Scripture; which not only signifies an Intellectual Vision and Comprehension  
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of God (as which more hereafter) but also the sensible Enjoyment of His Glorious Presence. Thus the Psalmist tells us, *That God covereth Himself with Light as with a Garment*, Psal. civ. 2. and this we may justly call the Habitation of His Essence. For thus the Apostle speaks concerning God, *who dwelleth in Light, that no Man can approach*, 1 Tim. vi. 16. And this Light and Glory of God is, properly speaking, an external and visible Majesty; as is evident from several Texts of Scripture, where we find express Mention made of it. Thus the Glory of God is said to have *appeared for six Days together on Mount Sinai*, *Exod. xxiv. 16.* and at the Dedication of the Temple the Scripture tell us, *it filled the House*, 1 Kings viii. 10. and it is said to have rested and abided in the Sanctuary, by reason of its constant and uninterrupted Continuance therein, *Exod. xl. 35.* And so great was the Brightness of this glorious Appearance, that tho' *Moses* saw only its Back-parts, *i. e.* some weak and imperfect Representation of it, yet by tarrying with God, and partaking of the Reflections of His Glory on Mount *Sinai* for a few Days, the Face of *Moses* shined so bright, that the People of *Israel* were afraid to come nigh him, neither were they able to look upon His Countenance, unless he covered it with a Veil, *Exod. xxxiv. 29, &c.* And if abiding with God for forty Days only upon Mount *Sinai*, where the Glory of God was so much veil'd and obscur'd, did so much brighten and illustrate his Countenance, how glorious do you think we shall be made, when we shall be admitted into His immediate Presence, where He shall discover and manifest His Glory in its utmost Perfection; and where our Faculties of Perception shall be so much improved and strengthened, that we shall be able to take a View of it in its full Brightness? And yet, besides this external Manifestation of God's Majesty, we shall be entertain'd and delighted with the glorious Appearance of our dear Saviour Christ in his Human Nature, in which He is now sat down at the Right

Hand of the Throne of God. When St Paul speaks of the Glory of those Bodies, with which the Saints shall be adorned at the Resurrection, he makes the Glory of them to consist in this, *That they shall be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious Body*, Phil. iii. 21. And how bright and glorious the Body of Christ is, our Saviour hath already in part discovered to the three Apostles at His Transfiguration on Mount *Taber*, who were so transported with Joy at this transitory Appearance of His Glory, which overshadowed them, that they could have been glad to have abided there for ever, *Matth.* xvii. How much more then shall we be ravished and delighted, when we shall behold the full and compleat Manifestation of His Glory in the Kingdom of Heaven? And surely this must be a blessed Place to dwell in, which the Supreme Lord of the Universe hath design'd for his own Residence and Habitation, and which is rendered in the highest Degree illustrious by the glorious Appearance of God and our Saviour *Christ*. But yet the Happiness of the Kingdom of Heaven does not only arise from the External Splendour and Glory of the Place itself, but also from this peculiar Property which shall attend all the Delights and Enjoyments thereof, *viz.* That they shall be pure and unmixed, without any thing that may allay and embitter the Relish of them. And for this Reason the Happiness of Heaven is frequently called in Scripture by the Name of *Rest*: *There remaineth a Rest for the People of God*, saith St Paul, Heb iv. 9. and St John, *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord, for they rest from their Labours*, Rev. xiv. 13. The Pleasures of this Life are all of them vain and deceitful, and we shall every one of us find them to be so, sooner or later, by Experience. But were they ever so great in themselves, they would be but of little Value and Esteem, because they are so frequently soured and interrupted by some kind or other of Sorrow and Affliction. *In this World Man is born*

to Trouble, Job v. 7. *And goeth forth to his Labour,* Psal. civ. 23. The greatest Part of Mankind are here obliged to work and toil hard to provide even the common Necessaries of Life; and that which highly aggravates their Misfortune, is, that what is procured and acquired by their Labour and Industry, instead of being gratefully return'd to themselves in some Measure and Proportion, when they stand in absolute Want and Need of it, is too often spent in Luxury and Riot, and in the most shameful Debauchery and Excess; but when we come to Heaven, our Labours will be entirely at an End. All the delightful Enjoyments of that Glorious Place will be provided ready for us, and we shall have no more to do than to reach out our Hands, that we may pluck those choice and delicious Fruits which shall grow in the Paradise of God for ever. In this World Man at his best State *is altogether Vanity,* Psal. xxxix. 5. We are oftentimes miserable even in the midst of our Enjoyments. When we are the most earnest and intent in the Pursuit of our Happiness, some unlucky Accident or other frequently happens, which quite spoils and destroys the Sense and Relish of it. In this Life we are all surrounded with Troubles and Afflictions; some Men are exposed to grievous Pains and Sufferings of Body; others meet with great Losses and Misfortunes; some are unhappy thro' the Disobedience and Miscarriage of Children; others suffer very much by extreme Poverty and Want; and there are few or none but are disquieted with the Censures and Reproaches of a malicious World. And, which is the heaviest Affliction of all, we are continually distracted with the Loss of our dearest Relations and best Friends, which wounds us to the Heart, and pierces us to the very Soul. And we are not only troubled and concerned at the Departure of our Relations and Friends, but are most of us, thro' Fear of our own Death, *all our Life-time subject to Bondage,* Heb. ii. 15. And, which is worse than all that I have mentioned, we are often

often made uneasy and miserable thro' the Stings and Reproaches of our own guilty Minds, and sorely disturbed within ourselves, to think that we, who are created in the very Image of God, and with such a Strength and Perfection of Understanding, should yet be so weak and foolish, as to let our Appetites and Passions get the better of our Reason, and thereby bring the greatest Blemish and Disgrace upon our Nature; and that we should be so base and ungrateful as to be continually offending and provoking our Good and Gracious God, who made us out of nothing, and is continually heaping his Favours and Blessings upon us, and who created us for this Purpose, that he might make us for ever happy. This is our natural State and Condition in this present World; and no wonder we should be sorely disquieted and distressed, when we have so many Arrows of Death and Misery continually flying round about us. But when we come to Heaven, all these things will be entirely at an end. We shall then *rest from all our Labours*, as the Apostle observes, from the Labours of the Body, as well as those of the Mind. We shall no more be exposed to Pains and Sufferings, nor grieved with Losses and Misfortunes. Our Happiness will be pure and unmixed, and there shall be nothing which will give us one Moment's Uneasiness and Disturbance to all Eternity; we shall no more be vexed at the Thoughts of displeasing God by our Sins; for, as will be seen hereafter, our Spirits will be made perfect, and we shall be beyond the Reach and Power of Temptation. And to say no more, we shall not be afraid of losing all this Happiness by Death; for when we come into Heaven, *we can die no more, but shall be equal to the Holy Angels, and shall be the Children of God, as being the Children of the Resurrection*, Luke x. 36. And thus we find St John describing the Happiness of the Heavenly Jerusalem: *And God, says he, shall wipe away all Tears from their Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, nei-*  
*ther.*



ther shall there be any more Pain ; for the former Things are passed away, Rev. xxi. 4.

But, 2<sup>dly</sup>. The Happiness of the Saints in Heaven shall further consist in that blessed and excellent Company which they shall there keep. Now what this Company is, we may read at large in the Words of St Paul, Heb. xii. 22, &c. where he tells us, that when we shall be arrived at the Heavenly City, we shall come to an innumerable Company of Angels, to the General Assembly and Church of the First-born, and to God the Judge of All, and to the Spirits of Just Men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the New Covenant. Blessed and excellent Company indeed ! Who would not strive and endeavour to the utmost to be admitted into it ? For when we are in Heaven, we shall not only be entertain'd with the external and visible Manifestation of the Glory of God, and our dear Saviour Christ, of which I have spoke already, but we shall likewise enjoy the invaluable Blessing and Advantage of their Conversation ; and sure it must be an inconceivable Happiness to be under the immediate Counsel and Direction of Infinite Wisdom, and to be transported with all those amazing and surprizing Discoveries which God shall make to us, both of his Works and Perfections. Of which more hereafter. And if in this Valley of Tears and Misery, which is design'd only as a State of Trial and Probation, we do yet receive innumerable Favours from God, and are on every side surrounded with his Blessings, we may well think that our Delight and Pleasure will be great and unspeakable, when our heavenly Father shall call us home, and receive us into his immediate Presence, there to reward us for our Duty and Obedience to him. And doubtless it will be a mighty Addition to our Bliss and Happiness in this Glorious Place, to have our dear and blessed Saviour constantly in our View, who is the great Instrument thereof, and to consider that it is owing to His stupendous Love in dying for us, that we are thus advanced  
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into his Father's Joy: not to mention the infinite Endearments of His Love and Affection towards us. *Father*, says he, *I will that they whom Thou hast given me be with me where I am*, John xvii. 24. And if the Conversation of Men of great Knowledge and Wisdom, and of a happy and agreeable Temper, be at present so engaging to us, what Transports of Joy and Delight may we not imagine will fill our Souls, when we shall be admitted into the Blessed Conversation of Angels and Saints; Beings not only perfect in Knowledge and Wisdom, but also of the most abundant and overflowing Love and Charity one towards another; and who are so far from envying and repining at our Happiness, that one main Part of their own Happiness will consist in communicating their Perfections to us, and in making every one of us as happy as they can. And this surely must be a most lovely and delightful Conversation, where there shall be the highest Knowledge without the least Pride, transcendent Excellency without any Envy, superiour Degrees of Happiness and Glory, and yet he that enjoys the very lowest of all fully pleased and satisfied, because the Glory and Perfection of every one is the Glory and Perfection of them all. Well therefore might the good old Man in *Cicero* cry out, 'O happy Day, when I shall go to that blessed Assembly of Spirits, and depart out of this wretched and miserably confused World (a)!'. But,

3<sup>d</sup>y. The Happiness of the Saints in Heaven shall still further consist in those delightful and entertaining Employments in which they shall spend their Time. Now, besides the many Acts of Love and Charity which the Angels and Saints shall exercise, and the many curious and surprizing Discoveries which they shall make one towards another, which I have just mention'd, there are these two Particulars, in which they shall chiefly employ their Time.

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(a) O præclarum diem, cum ad illud divinum animorum concilium cœtumque proficiscar, cumque ex hac turba & colluvione discedam!

*Cic. de senectute, ad fin.*

*First*, In contemplating upon God and His Divine Perfections. Contemplation is not only a proper Act of a reasonable Creature, but it is His Perfection too; and the greater Perfection he arrives at in Acts of Contemplation, the greater will be his Happiness; be aſe herein, as *Aristotle* truly obſerves, he becomes more like to God (*b*), whoſe Happiness mainly conſiſts in viewing and contemplating His own Perfections, and the Wiſdom and Glory of all His Works. And ſince we find by Experience, that Enquiries into Nature do at preſent adminiſter ſo much Pleaſure to us, and thoſe Discoveries in Knowledge, which are made by hard Study and Labour, are yet ſo very agreeable and entertaining, what unſpeakable Delight muſt needs poſſeſs our Minds, when we ſhall be introduced into the immediate Preſence of God, and have a full and compleat View and Comprehension of his Glorious Eſſence and Perfections? When all the Beauties of the Creation ſhall be diſplay'd to us; all the profound Myſteries of Religion, ſuch as the Trinity and Incarnation, *which the Angels themſelves deſire to look into*, 1 Pet. i. 12. ſhall be laid open; *and we ſhall know the Love of Chriſt, which paſſeth Knowledge*, Eph. iii. 19. when all the Difficulties in Providence ſhall be explained, and we ſhall clearly ſee with what infinite Wiſdom, Juſtice and Goodneſs, God hath governed this World; and in particular, when even the hard and ſevere Diſpenſations of His Providence ſhall be admired and revered, and we ſhall be fully convinced that the greateſt Afflictions and Sufferings which beſel us in this Life, were deſigned for our Good; and that to the Care and Love of our Heavenly Father in

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(b) Τοῖς μὲν γὰρ θεοῖς ὁ βίος μανδύειθ· τοῖς δ' ἀνθρώποις ἐν ὕττον  
ἐπιώματι τῆς τοιαύτης ἐργασίας ὑπάρχει τῶν δ' ἁλλῶν ζώων ὅτι  
ἐν δαιμονίῳ. ἔτι δὲ ἰδὲ κοινὰ δαίμονας, ἐφ' ὅσον δὴ διατείνῃ ἡ  
δυναμὶς καὶ ἡ ἐν δαιμονία καὶ οἷς μᾶλλον ὑπάρχει τὸ θάνατον καὶ τὸ ἐν-  
δαιμονεῖν, ἕκαστα συμβέβηκε, ἀλλὰ κατὰ τὴν δυνάμιν. αὐτὴ γὰρ  
καὶ δ' αὐτὴν τιμῶν ὥς ἐν αὐτῇ ἡ ἐν δαιμονία θάνατος.

Arist. Ethic. ad Nicom. lib. x. cap. 8.

correcting us for our Sins, we do in a great Measure owe that perfect and inconceivable Felicity which we enjoy.

Such Acts of Contemplation as these must needs render an intelligent Being extremely happy ; and yet the Happiness of the Saints in Heaven does not proceed barely from Acts of thinking and contemplating upon God and his Perfections, but also from those blessed and vital Communications which shall thereby be made to their Souls ; for the more they think upon God and his Perfections, the more will they be delighted and enamoured with them ; and the more they are delighted with them, the more earnestly will they endeavour to imitate them, and transcribe them into their own Natures. Now, as the Happiness of any Being necessarily arises from his Perfection, so the Happiness of the Saints will proportionably increase, as they receive greater Communications from God to their Souls. And doubtless, it will then be very abundant and unmeasurable, when, as St Paul observes, *the Spirits of just Men shall be made perfect*, Heb. xii. 23. and their Faculties enlarged and improved to that Degree, as shall enable them to attain to a clear and full View and Comprehension of God and His Perfections. And this Communication of God's Perfections is represented to us in Scripture by several Expressions, and particularly by that of *seeing God*, Matth. v. 8. 1 John iii. 2. Which does not so much signify the visible Sight of His external and glorious Presence, or even an intellectual View and Contemplation of His Essence (tho' the Phrase is partly to be so understood) as the real and actual Enjoyment of Him. For thus, in the Language of Scripture, to *see* is the same thing as to *enjoy* ; as in the Psalmist, *to see good Days*, is to enjoy them, *Psal. xxxiv. 12.* And in the Words of our Saviour, to see the Kingdom of Heaven is to have the Possession of it, *John iii. 3.* And if, as some Divines think (and that with good Reason) the Faculties of our Souls, when we come to Heaven, shall for ever gradually enlarge and improve ;



improve; our Happiness shall then continually encrease, and grow greater, as we become more and more perfect, by a more exact and profound Contemplation of God, and the greater and more diffusive Communication of His Perfections to us. And thus, as our Perfection increases, our Happiness will increase with it, till at length we are become as perfect and happy as it is possible for finite created Beings to be, and in the most beautiful Language of Scripture, *are fill'd with all the Fullness of God*, Eph. iii. 19. But,

2dly. Another Thing in which the Saints in Heaven shall spend their Time, will be in singing Anthems of Praise and Adoration to God, the great Author of their Being and Happiness. And this the Holy Scripture represents as their peculiar Office and Employment, *Isa. vi. 3. Rev. iv. 8. There they sing the Praises of God, who created all Things, v. 11. There they sing the Song of Moses, and of the Lamb, ch. xv. 3. And cease not Day and Night, saying, Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come, Rev. iv. 8.* And now, if in this dull and inactive State, where the Soul is almost wholly immers'd in the very Dregs of Matter, it be yet so very entertaining to us to sing Praise to God, yea, and as the Psalmist observes, *It is a joyful and pleasant Thing to be thankful*, cxlvii. 1. It must surely administer the greatest Delight to our Minds, when we shall sing the Praises of God in the Kingdom of Heaven, where our Souls shall be wholly freed from the Chains of the Body, and shall be sprightly and vigorous, and in a State of the most perfect Liveliness and Freedom. And if in this present Life, where we know so little of the true Nature of God, and where his repeated Love and Favour to us is interrupted and obscured by almost continual Instances of Sorrow and Affliction, we yet find sufficient and abundant Grounds to praise and adore his Goodness; we shall then surely be fill'd with Transport, and our Hearts shall overflow with Joy, when we shall sing to the Praise and Glory of God in Heaven,

Heaven, where we shall have a compleat View and Apprehension of God's Perfections, where we shall be free from all Danger, and beyond the Reach of any Trouble, *when we shall be satisfied with the Plenteousness of God's House, and for ever drink of his Pleasures as out of the River, Psal. xxxvi. 8.* And moreover, it will not only be a Matter of great Joy to sing the Praises of God ourselves, but we shall be infinitely delighted in hearing those divine Anthems and Hallelujahs, which none but Heavenly and Immortal Spirits can sing. When the Prophet, in a Vision, saw the Angels of God attending upon his Throne in the Temple, who were chaunting forth the Praise and Glory of the Lord, the Scripture tells us, that while one of the Seraphims was thus singing, *the Posts of the Door moved at his Voice, Isa. vi. 4.* And surely then, when all the Blessed Angels and Saints shall join together in full Choir, and the absolute Purity and Holiness of their Hearts shall inspire their Musick with a Divine Force and Energy (c); the very Foundations of the *New Jerusalem* shall shake, and the whole Heaven resound with the melodious Harmony, and the Souls of the Blessed shall be fill'd with such Extasies and Raptures of Joy and Delight, as no Tongue can express, nor Imagination conceive.

And thus I have, as briefly as I could, shewn you wherein  
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(c) What is here observ'd concerning the Holiness and Purity of the Saints and Angels inspiring their Musick with the greatest Force and Energy, should put us in mind that this is also a necessary Qualification to render our own Praises of God acceptable to Him, both in this Life and in the next. To which Purpose the Words of a learned Writer, in great Vogue at present, are very just and pertinent. *viz.* "We can have no tolerable Notion of Goodness without being tolerably Good. So that if the Praise of a Divine Being be so great a Part of His Worship, we should, methinks, learn Goodness, were it for nothing else than that we might learn, in some tolerable Manner, how to praise. For the Praise of Goodness from an unsound hollow Heart, must certainly make the greatest Dissonance in the World." *Characteristicks*, Vol. I. p. 43. An Observation this, which many Persons among us who come frequently to Church, and join in the Service with little true Affection and Devotion in their Hearts, would do well to consider.

consists the Happiness and Glory of the Saints in Heaven, and yet perhaps what I have now represented to you may not be the thousandth Part of that Happiness, which God hath prepared for them that love him. For who knows the Treasures of infinite Love, or is able to set forth and display those Joys which are at God's Right-Hand for evermore? *such as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, &c.* And methinks, if we were to have but a short and finite Enjoyment of this inestimable Felicity, it might be sufficient to support us under all the Difficulties of Religion, and to engage our utmost Affection and Desires towards the Obtainment of it. And certainly, even in this View, we might justly say to the Saints in Heaven, what our Saviour said to His Disciples here upon Earth, *Blessed are the Eyes which see the Things which ye see*, Luke x. 23. And in the Words of the Psalmist, cxliv. 15. *Happy are the People that are in such a Case, yea, blessed are the People who have the Lord for their God.* For to use the excellent Words of a most worthy and learned Writer upon this Occasion, 'We are dazzled, says he, with the Glory and Grandeur of Things here below, because we know no better; but I am apt to think, that if we knew what it was to be an Angel for one Hour, we should return to this World, tho' it were to sit on the brightest Throne in it, with more Loathing and Reluctancy than we would now descend into a loathsome Dungeon or Sepulchre (d).' But because it would cast a most bitter Aspersions upon the Delights of the Blessed, and in the greatest Measure allay and spoil the Relish and Enjoyment of them, if they could foresee they should ever be deprived of them, it has therefore pleased God, for the fuller Manifestation of His Love and Goodness, and the more effectually to excite us to the Practice of Religion and Virtue, to declare and promise that the Happiness of the Righteous in the Kingdom of Heaven shall be everlasting. Thus the Apostle tells

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us, *that when we are come to the New Jerusalem, there shall be no more Death*, Rev. xxi. 4. St Peter speaking of the Inheritance of the Saints, describes it as *incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away*, 1 Epist. i. 4. And to say no more in so plain a Matter, our Blessed Saviour assures us in the Words of the Text, that *the Righteous shall go into Life Eternal*, which is the usual Phrase and Expression in Scripture for Eternal Happiness. **ETERNAL HAPPINESS**——! At the Thoughts and Expectation of This I am quite overcome with Surprize, and swallowed up in Admiration. And indeed how should I possibly be otherwise, who am but a weak, frail, and mortal Creature? When at the Sound of Eternal Happiness and Joy all the Assembly in Heaven is mute; angelical Oratory itself is struck dumb; and the very Cherubims and Seraphims stand silently wondering, and overwhelmed in Rapture; none but that high and lofty Being *that inhabiteth Eternity*, Isa. lvii. 11. *and endureth from everlasting to everlasting*, Psalm xc. 2. does in any Measure know and understand what Eternity means. And therefore, if we shall be so happy as to attain to this excellent Portion (which God in His Mercy and Goodness grant we may all be, and which we ought to think we have purchased at a very easy Rate, tho' we should suffer for it upon the Cross, or wade to it through a Sea of Blood) we can at present only conceive thus much of it, and we may comfort ourselves with this Apprehension, *viz.* that when all the Statues and Monuments of Brass and Marble in the Universe shall be decayed and crumbled into Dust; when the Sun, Moon, and Stars, and all the stupendous Works of Nature are perish'd, and quite forgotten; and when we have lived in infinite Bliss and Glory for Ages of Ages, we shall still be in Being; as young and vigorous, as gay and sprightly, as we were the first Moment of our Admission; and so far from being tired and cloy'd with our Delights and Enjoyments, that they will be every Moment new to us, and more



more and more agreeable and entertaining. And thus we shall dwell with God and Christ, and with the Holy Angels and Saints, in infinite Joy and infinite Love, partaking of such a Happiness as is absolutely inconceivable, and yet still growing, still encreasing, without Measure, and without End.

And thus much concerning the Happiness which Righteous and Good Men shall enjoy in the Life to come, I proceed now, in the

*Second Place*, To consider what Effect and Influence the Belief and Expectation of this great Happiness ought to have upon us. Of which I have Time to speak but very briefly.

And now, *my Brethren*, since God hath prepared for us a State of Eternal and Inconceivable Happiness, let us frequently think and meditate upon this great Point of our Religion, that it may have its due Effect and Influence upon our Minds; and let it be the great Delight and Joy of our Hearts, to contemplate those Glories which are reserved for us in Heaven; let the Consideration of them support us under all the Troubles of this Life, since *our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory*, 2 Cor. iv. 17. And let this also engage us to be patient under Poverty, and satisfied with the Inequalities of Fortune, because when we come to Heaven, God will have no Respect of Persons, *but we shall be all made Kings and Priests to God for ever*, Rev. i. 6. And particularly, the Belief and Expectation of our future Happiness should wean our Affections from the Things of this World; since how great soever they may be in themselves, *they are not worthy to be compared with the least Degree of that Glory which shall be revealed hereafter*. And this should make us very careful and diligent in the Improvement of all those Talents which God hath entrusted us with; since, according to our Improvement of them, so shall our Reward be (e). And this should inspire us with a most lively Sense of the Necessity of Charity, inasmuch as by this Means *we provide for ourselves Bags which wax not old, a Treasure in the Heavens which faileth not*, Luke xii. 33. And especially it should induce us to that which is the highest Instance of Charity, *viz. a sincere and earnest Endeavour for the Conversion of Sinners, and the Salvation*

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(e) See Luke xix. 16, &c. 2 Cor. ix. 6. 1 Cor. xv. 41.

variation of Mens Souls ; for, as the Prophet observes, *they that turn many to Righteousness, shall shine like the Stars for ever and ever*, Dan. xii. 3. And above all, since the Happiness of the next Life is not given to us arbitrarily by way of partial Decree and Favour, but entirely as the Reward of our Duty and Obedience, this should fully convince us of the indispensable Necessity of Holiness and Virtue in order to the Obtainment of Eternal Life. Consider then, Sinner, I beseech thee, what thou art doing, when for the sake of the perishing Pleasures of Sin thou dost relinquish thy Title to the Kingdom of God. Remember that Heaven is your Inheritance, and if with profane *Esau* you will sell your Birthright, you shall never be able to regain the Blessing, nor find Room for Repentance, *tho' you should seek it carefully with Tears*, Heb. xii. 17. For there is one Truth established in Nature, as well as confirm'd by Revelation, and all the Powers in Heaven and Earth cannot reverse and disannul it, *viz. without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14.

Which that we may all diligently and constantly exercise and practise in this World, in order to the Obtainment of that immense Glory and Happiness, which is reserved for all Righteous and Good Men in the World to come, I pray God in His Infinite Mercy to grant, for the Sake, and through the Merits of CHRIST JESUS, our SAVIOUR: TO WHOM, with the FATHER, and the BLESSED SPIRIT, be ascribed, as is most due, all Honour, Power, Might, Worship, and Dominion, now, and for evermore. *Amen.*

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